CAPITALISM *on a* VENTILATOR

The Impact of COVID-19 in China & the U.S.

An anthology of social justice activists discussing a global choice: cooperation vs. competition

Edited by Sara Flounders & Lee Siu Hin

A Project of the International Action Center & China U.S. Solidarity Network

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Throughout this anthology the references to the number of cases and fatalities are based on the date each piece was written. The figures are consistent with the Johns Hopkins University COVID19 Tracker, an internationally recognized daily database to reflect unfolding events.. Articles are arranged in general chronological order within each of the 6 Sections of the book

Illustrations, photos, charts, graphs and extensive footnotes that accompany several articles are not included in this book. But the captions and references to them remain. This information can easily be found by checking the original source. The original source of each article is listed at the back of the book in: Sources of Articles.

Censorship Takes Many Forms: Why is a Discussion of 238,000 COVID Deaths in U.S. Vs 4,471 COVID Deaths in China Blocked?

By: Raymond Tyler

Due to the growing hostility of the U.S. establishment toward China and the accompanying surge in anti-Asian racism, it was an enormous challenge to find printing and distribution for this anthology, which includes many published authors. The effort to place this challenging book on a large corporate website turned into a several month struggle with the world's largest online bookseller – Amazon. Amazon Books claims ease of placement, best order fulfillment and lack of censorship, but failed to deliver.

Amazon's block of this book is a clear example of U.S. corporate censorship. We were notified: "Due to the rapidly changing nature of information around coronavirus, we are referring customers to official sources for advice about the prevention or treatment of the virus. Amazon reserves the right to determine what content we offer according to our content guidelines. Your book does not comply with our guidelines. As a result, we are not offering your book for sale." Our anthology describes no magical cures. It simply reports standard public health measures that the Chinese government was able to implement that are not at all controversial among public health experts. Many of our authors simply point to China's social system as one that facilitates application of these methods.

Amazon also refused to take down the un-proofed version of the book, which we had put up as a placeholder. Please do not buy the unauthorized version currently listed on Amazon.

Although Amazon claims it publishes only "official sources for advice" on the COVID-19 virus, Amazon has allowed books promoting wild conspiracy theories that the virus is exaggerated, a hoax or human-made and masks and quarantines are useless. During the pandemic Amazon has also listed products that are dangerous quack "cures" for COVID-19.

Hostility to China as national policy impacts every area of discussion. This is reflected in the trade war, sanctions and military operations, and by canceling educational and cultural exchanges and any attention or coverage on any level of China's accomplishments. In retrospect, it is hardly surprising it extends to blocking books and topics of discussion.

Many important chapters in this anthology were written in March, April, and May of 2020 as the full impact of the COVID-19 pandemic hit the U.S., and people were actively looking for answers and asking questions.

The questions working people worldwide started asking sent U.S. media outlets and private corporate platforms into a wall of censorship and political repression. Why has China done so much better in containing COVID-19 and saving lives? The answer corporate media gave was an onslaught of racist and imperialist attacks against China including claims of dishonesty, brutality and suppression of information. Several major news sources even went so far as to accuse China of manufacturing the virus. Any evidence contrary to the corporate narrative was thoroughly suppressed.

This book was written by people around the world and edited by a U.S. activist and a Chinese activist. The evidence and data available provide a very different answer from that given the corporate media. China contained the virus because their free medical care and planned economic system is science based and intensely cooperative. By every statistic, countries building socialism did far better in combating the virus -- Cuba, China, Laos, Vietnam and North Korea, to name a few. We hope you read this book and explore the reasons why China and other countries building socialism did far better than the capitalist world did.

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Introduction

Unfolding Crisis: It Doesn't Have To Be This Way!

By: Sara Flounders
August 1, 2020, IACenter.org

THE UNITED STATES is reeling from a triple crisis: the Covid-19 pandemic that has inflicted over 4.4 million confirmed cases and more than 150,000 deaths since the end of February, the most of any country in the world; beyond this pain, suffering and death, over a million workers a week have filed for unemployment ever since April; in the face of shocking instances of police murders, millions of people all over the country, in big cities and small, remote, rural towns have marched and protested racism and systematic abuse of police power.

Facing multiple catastrophes, the U.S. authorities sought someone to blame. Since Covid-19 was first identified in China, politicians of all stripes in the U.S. have assigned the blame for Covid-19 to China and added a worldwide confrontation to the political and economic scene. No day goes by without the U.S. corporate media promoting totally distorted and negative news attacks on the People's Republic of China.

This anthology of articles by social justice activists details the dangers and inaccuracies of this media campaign and analyzes China's contribution to worldwide efforts to control and mitigate Covid-19. The book is a joint project by China US Solidarity Network and International Action Center.

As an anthology, the collection reflects different perspectives and political outlooks. What is remarkably consistent is that the authors confront anti-China rhetoric and urge a scientific approach to this crisis. These writers hold co-operation and solidarity as the best way forward.

Since this book reports the casualties of a rapidly escalating, global pandemic over months, with chapters organized by date within each section, it's important to note the date each chapter was written.

Republicans and Democrats trade barbs over who is "softer" on China. The U.S. closes consulates, ruptures business contracts and major trade deal, expels students and unilaterally cancels long-established science collaborations and academic and art exchanges, while holding provocative U.S. naval maneuvers in the South China Sea and placing missile systems where they threaten China.

The Covid-19 pandemic puts the contention between the U.S. and China into sharp relief. This struggle is not just between two contending nation states or great powers, as many commentators claim. It is unresolved contradiction between a globalized world economy and an existing but moribund and archaic capitalist system, based on the private expropriation of wealth and resources. The relentless drive of capitalism to reap a profit from every type of human interaction now stands exposed as the greatest danger to the people of the whole planet.

Cooperation threatens U.S. domination

U.S. capitalism has no effective way of resolving the Covid-19 pandemic, even within its borders. This failure is a public humiliation. Washington is also incapable of offering leadership to its imperialist allies or to the developing countries it has long dominated.

The narrow for-profit constraints of capitalism, the absolute need to maximize profits in order for the system to survive, make global cooperation impossible and threaten U.S. hegemony. Within the U.S., the largest capitalist economic crisis in 90 years has shut down industries and services, leaving nearly 30 million, one out of five workers, as of July 30, officially unemployed.

Cyclical capitalist economic crashes have been a regular part of the world's economy for hundreds of years but the onset of the current one has been much quicker and vastly more devastating than normal.

China has been able to avoid these cyclical crises, but you wouldn't hear about that here. China's success is obscured by a barrage of attacks claiming to value freedom over dictatorship. Democrats blame Republicans for the economic crash here,

and vice versa. But both political parties and their talking heads understand that they must not blame the competitive for-profit system itself. Exposing that truth could lead to revolutionary conclusions.

The U.S. now has the world's highest number of Covid-19 fatalities, over 150,000, as of July 25. China, with four times the population, has had fewer than 5,000 fatalities. (worldometers.info/ coronavirus/#news) This stands as a monumental indictment of the capitalist system, which is of course ignored in the corporate media.

The chaotic disorganization in the U.S. and its inability to consistently test and report the results of this testing, even six months after the virus started to spread, expose the fragmented and profit-driven infrastructure of health care in the United States.

Searing images not easily erased: medical staff pleading for personal protective equipment in desperate job actions on YouTube videos and GoFundMe sites, while wearing rain ponchos, garbage bags, bandanas and shower caps; overwhelmed hospitals, exhausted staff and refrigerated trucks full of bodies.

China's response exposes U.S. failure

As several articles highlight, China, by contrast, although hit first by the virus, has exhibited an orderly, scientific and highly organized response on a national scale. This response is still more impressive since China is a developing country coming from an oppressed, colonized, absolutely impoverished past. Even now its development is highly uneven.

China's government plans to end poverty before 2021, to arrive at a moderately prosperous society for all by 2030 and reach a developed, socialist economy by 2050. It's recent historic accomplishment of lifting 800 million people out of extreme poverty confirms the essential role of socialist planning.

With the outbreak of the COVID-19 virus, after a short period of planning and evaluation, the whole country shut down, practicing social distancing and strict health protocols. At the same time, those responsible rushed tons of equipment

and thousands of medical personnel, outfitted head–to–toe in protective medical gear, to Wuhan, where two fully equipped hospitals were constructed within weeks in Wuhan to care for the surge in Covid-19 cases.

They instituted food distribution, orderly shopping, a guaranteed income and a freeze on all rent and credit card payments. Free national health care already existed. Massive national testing immediately confined the spread of the virus.

In other places where building socialism is the goal, even in countries starved for resources, — including Vietnam, Cuba, Venezuela, North Korea to the state of Kerala in India — a mobilized population has proven the best protection against the virus and has kept casualties low.

After it brought the pandemic under control, China sent hundreds of planeloads of medical equipment to every country in Africa and throughout Asia, and shipped essential supplies to Europe and the U.S. The U.S. government went in the opposite direction. At the very moment when appeals for human solidarity and cooperation was most needed, Washington was instead hijacking and redirecting supplies from countries it had put under sanctions.

Competition at all costs

The U.S. failure to adequately test the population represents a failure of a system. The U.S. has no national health care system. A majority of authors in this book focus on this failure.

Medical insurance is generally tied to employment, and care is provided on a for-profit basis by giant hospital groups, pharmaceutical monopolies, labs and urgent care centers. The few state and city agencies that provide low-cost or free health care to the poor, were already gutted of funds. In the past decade, many social services have been privatized and contracted out to private corporations.

The World Health Organization had offered a mass-produced and easily available test kit, used by more than 153 countries. Instead, the government assigned the production of kits to private U.S. labs, which bid for lucrative contracts to make

millions of kits. Many kits were defective. The whole campaign, which lacked any cohesive plan, was plagued with errors.

As a result, as of July 30 the U.S. still has one of the lowest rates of testing of any impacted country. This has hampered the ability to get accurate information to map the spread of Covid-19. Because the U.S. lacks a national health care system, the reporting of local test results to state and national databases is still in complete disarray. The same thing is true of treatment plans and allocating scarce medical supplies.

In the spring, the world epicenter of the virus became New York, a financial and media center and the largest city of U.S. imperialism. This made the medical chaos impossible to ignore. Now it is spreading across the country and is far from controlled.

University labs that try to fill the gap and help produce test kits run into a wall. Hospital systems and health insurance conglomerates are locked into exclusive contracts with giant private labs like LabCorp and Quest, which use competing and often incompatible software programs. It is almost impossible to enter a test result that is out of the network. (New York Times, May 21)

The racist and arrogant Trump administration is not the only cause of the Covid-19 fiasco. State governors, city mayors, Democrats and Republicans, are trapped in a tangle of conflicting regulations, competing lobbyists, exclusive contracts and unconnected platforms. Even arriving at a consistent and timely count of the number of positive tests and soaring fatalities is still impossible.

Hunger grows

In late March, a Congress hammered out a bipartisan $2.2 trillion stimulus package, making great promises of relief for workers and small businesses. But most money allocated to small businesses had to go through banks, which required a relationship that many Black and Latinx owned businesses didn't have. Extra federal benefits to unemployed workers went through overwhelmed and unresponsive state unemployment offices. Some workers waited months before receiving any money. Migrants, prisoners and homeless people got nothing.

Large corporations grabbed much of the stimulus money promised to small businesses to stay afloat. At the same time, trillions of federal dollars were pumped into the stock market in an attempt to revive it.

Throughout the spring, millions who qualify for the meager funds had to leap bureaucratic hurdles — online forms, crashing databases and understaffed phones — to try to receive what they were promised.

Meanwhile, there are no plans to address the most glaring problem: hunger. Food lines stretch for blocks, and food pantries are completely overwhelmed.

It is estimated that more than 2 million people in New York City go hungry — a quarter of the population. In one borough, the Bronx, it's even worse: One-third are hungry. A patchwork of over 1,000 emergency food programs, including soup kitchens, food pantries and bag lunches provide limited and uncoordinated relief.

Spreading COVID-19 globally

Capitalism intentionally breaks down social cohesion. Mass mobilizations, unions and community self-control organizations are a threat to exploitation. Police repression and racism are an essential part of the fabric of this society, used like Krazy Glue to forcibly hold together a crumbling system.

Even entirely reasonable solutions, such as the immediate release of prisoners from overcrowded prisons and detention centers, have been stalemated. Despite national campaigns, car caravans and tens of thousands of petition signatures and phone calls on the danger of prisons and detention centers spreading Covid-19, the prison population has stayed basically the same.

But migrant detention centers are being emptied in a way that spreads the virus globally. Although international air traffic is almost shut down, forcible deportations have been made even to countries that have closed their borders to slow the spread of the virus. The Trump administration threatens sanctions against Central American countries that refuse to accept nationals who test positive. Trump is accused of willfully spreading the disease

to Central America through deportations, including more than 100 flights to Guatemala. (Salon, April 19)

Military planning goes on

This decaying imperialist system does make plans and has built an elaborate infrastructure. It is focused on high-tech military preparations, new missiles, aircraft carriers, supersonic jets, maintaining 5,000 military bases and building new bases. This is enormously profitable for the largest U.S. corporations — the military-industrial complex and oil giants that are linked to the largest banks. Hostility to China is lucrative for these corporations. Their lobbyists, even in the midst of a pandemic, are demanding new funds and more plans.

The U.S. ruling circles have always been hostile to the revolution that transformed China and broke neocolonial domination. Their hope was that capitalist penetration of China would overturn this accomplishment.

Now that their hopes of regaining control of China's enormous market are fading, the threat of war is growing.

Beginning in 2010, the Obama-Clinton "pivot to Asia" signaled a determination to reassert U.S. dominance. The plan was to surround China with reinvigorated military alliances and new batteries of missiles. There was bipartisan consensus from the beginning to increase naval confrontation in the South China Sea and heightened subversion from Hong Kong to Xinjiang, while stoking a trade war. Endless commentators have described this as the new Cold War. The Pentagon's recent announcements of new nuclear tests, mass production of thousands of hypersonic nuclear missiles and U.S.-commanded war games in Europe and the Pacific are an ominous escalation.

In reality, it is a conflict created by an outmoded and decaying capitalist system that is confronting a new form of social cooperation and collective ownership that is beginning to unfold — socialism.

By every possible measure of the virus and of deaths due to a host of many other neglected sicknesses, it is clear that the

capitalist profit system itself is the greatest danger to people's health and well-being.

Just a comparison of the number of fatalities confirms how criminally responsible this chaotic economic system is for the deaths of millions of people globally and most glaringly in the U.S. Several authors in this anthology make this comparison. In the corporate media the two sharply different statistics are never mentioned.

According to the highly reputable Johns Hopkins University Coronavirus Resource Center, which maintains a global daily database, as of July 30 the U.S. has the highest number of Covid-19 deaths in the world — 151,760 fatalities. By the most cautious estimate, U.S. fatalities will continue at a rate of more than 5,000 deaths a week, every week for months, into the future. (coronavirus.jhu.edu/map.html)

Projected spikes based on re-opening businesses and the relaxation of social distancing protocols may further escalate these fatalities. More ominous is that even a higher wave of deaths is projected into the winter months. (tinyurl.com/y9e7hlm6)

By the same source for the same date, China by comparison has had fewer than 5,000 total fatalities (4,634 deaths).

More significant is that China has been able to halt the spread of the virus within the country.

There is no expectation that the spread of the virus will be halted within the U.S. Cautious estimates now predict a death toll of 200,000 people by Oct. 1.

It is essential to examine the reason for the dramatically different outcomes, not only with China but with other countries taking a cooperative approach.

China, a still developing country with a population of 1.4 billion, has demonstrated to the world that the Covid virus can be controlled and contained with a scientific approach and with a coordinated social mobilization of the population.

Cuba, a small, blockaded country of 11.3 million, has also confirmed that, despite sanctions and blockade. the entire population can be protected and maintain good health. Besides protecting their own population, Cuban medical teams have

traveled with essential supplies to set up more aid projects for Covid-19 around the world than has the World Health Organization.

Vietnam, with a population of more than 95 million, has had zero reported Covid-19 deaths and only 240 positive cases. Their tactics also involve active tracing measures; clear nationally enforced quarantines with guaranteed food, supplies and essential services; along with mobilization of medical students and retired doctors and nurses to push back the spread of the deadly virus. (For more, see (tinyurl.com/yboto4qa/.)

It's the system

Every field of science needs to cooperate and study this deadly virus to find treatments, a vaccine and a cure. But also needed is the study of the social and economic system that makes a virus so wildly uncontrollable in capitalist countries.

In the United States, supposedly the most technologically developed and wealthiest country in the world, the whole population faces total dysfunction of the government's social programs that could have controlled the virus. This is true at every level — from testing to quarantines, to providing PPE for essential workers or essential funding for millions of unemployed workers on the brink of evictions and literal starvation. Now food lines have begun to stretch for blocks, sometimes miles. Hospitals in some places are so overwhelmed that the sick are turned away in droves.

As the Covid pandemic spirals out of control, the other co-morbidities of capitalism arise. The highest toll of sickness and fatalities is every area of the country in nationally oppressed communities of color.

Hunger in children is soaring. With classrooms closed for months because of the pandemic, millions of children are going hungry. More than 20 percent of children are not getting enough to eat. Half of U.S. school children qualify for subsidized meals. Even the limited aid mandated by Congress has reached only 4.4 million of the 30 million hungry children who qualify. (tinyurl.com/yc5gx9tp)

Almost all nonessential medical services have been curtailed. Cancer screenings, sexual health services, drug and stop smoking programs, diabetes, tuberculosis and HIV monitoring, mental health support, dentistry, vaccinations and routine checkups are all on hold.

Thousands of medical workers in all these fields face extreme pay cuts and layoffs. Since all hospitals, including public hospitals, operate in a for-profit funding environment, and since "nonessential services are often the procedures that make profit, hospitals are going bankrupt at an unprecedented rate.

In a U.N. report the World Food Organization warned that, even in wealthy countries, indirect deaths could eventually eclipse the number of direct deaths. In the developing world, famines and total social breakdowns are a far greater threat with 130 million people at risk of starvation. (tinyurl.com/yblhr3zv)

In the U.S. a new round of "stimulus" for working people is under vague discussion. But essential social programs for working people are last in line after the Federal Reserve's urgent need to pump trillions of dollars into the stock market and maintain a military budget larger than that of the rest of the world combined.

Blaming China

Because the U.S. has failed to stop the spread or to provide basic care, the government must make every effort to deflect blame. As U.S. prestige around the world has plunged in light of the complete disarray of its response, the push to "blame China" has intensified.

A look at articles in the corporate media on the Covid-19 pandemic finds almost every narration includes at least a paragraph blaming China or attacking China for a slow initial response.

Yet China's response was stunningly fast in alerting the world and in mobilizing their population and full resources of the state. Compared to the U.S., China acted at the speed of light — and the U.S. at the speed of a tortoise.

Timeline

In evaluating who is responsible for the global spread of Covid-19, it is important to look at the facts, dates and numbers. Several chapters take this up in detail. The dates best expose this crude slander against China.

The virus was first identified in China and announced to the World Health Organization on Dec. 30, 2019. At that time, although there were several severe cases of a new and unusual pneumonia in China, there was not yet one death.

By Jan. 1, the Wuhan market where it is now believed the virus originated was closed down. Public health notices and detailed precautions to all health departments and medical institutions, as well as online information for a new viral pneumonia of unknown cause, were being rolled out throughout China. (A detailed explanation of these steps of identification, containment, rigorous testing and treatment is available at tinyurl.com/ruf7er6 http://www. xinhuanet.com/english/2020-04/06/c_138951662.htm)

By Jan. 7 Chinese researchers had identified the Covid-19 virus. All this happened before the first reported Covid-19 death in China on Jan. 9.

By Jan. 12 China announced to the world the genetic sequence of the virus and freely shared that sequence in order to aid the world in the mass building of diagnostic kits. The major high-tech and industrial hub of Wuhan, with a population of 11 million, was under strict lockdown for 76 days. In less than two weeks, over 40,000 medics came from all over China to Wuhan to assist. Meanwhile, quarantine measures were put in place in the whole country. Industries, schools, theaters, parks, sports and all social gatherings had been shut down.

However, under China's social system, rooted in its socialist revolution of 1949, wages were guaranteed and essential services continued. Rent, mortgage and credit card payments were frozen.

In February WHO officially reported: "In the face of a previously unknown virus, China has rolled out perhaps the most ambitious, agile and aggressive disease containment effort

in history." The report added, "The remarkable speed with which Chinese scientists and public health experts isolated the causative virus, established diagnostic tools, and determined key transmission parameters, such as the route of spread and incubation period, provided the vital evidence base for China's strategy, gaining invaluable time for the response."

A vaccine is not a cure

Finding treatments and a vaccine for those who test positive will not automatically solve the global pandemic of Covid-19.

That's because the drive to compete at all costs is an ingrained and systemic response of the capitalist market system. That system is deeply threatened by cooperation — even when millions of lives are at stake.

Thus, the U.S. government is refusing to cooperate with China in developing a vaccine. The very idea of learning from China's experience is met with official, racist disdain.

The racism is a cover-up for the fact that cooperation in developing a vaccine is a direct economic threat to far-flung U.S. business interests — and to the capitalist foundation of the U.S. Big Pharma, the pharmaceutical industry, cannot risk a freely available, globally distributed vaccine that would be a dire threat to its corporate profits — and more than enough cause to play the "blame China" game.

In thinking of why the U.S. has failed to contain the pandemic, and why U.S. powers that be spurn global cooperation in finding a cure, it is helpful to consider the prevalence of hunger — in the U.S. and around the world.

The cure for hunger is completely simple and understood by every human being. Hunger is cured by providing food to the hungry.

Nevertheless, hunger and hunger-related diseases killed 9 million people in 2019, more than from AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis combined. (tinyurl.com/rzvc5ls)

Yet there is no "Race for a Cure for Hunger." In fact, there is a global glut of food — more than enough to feed every person in

the world. But in a world and a global economy in which capitalist property relations prevail, hunger remains a global killer!

In that world, U.S. imperialism — with a still-powerful military force at its command — resists every challenge to its profits. So hunger through economic sanctions is instead used as a weapon of regime change and U.S.-orchestrated coups. Hunger is a problem that is never solved under capitalism.

But hunger is the first problem tackled by every socialist country in an organized way. That is why countries that have built and activated a socialist base — like China — have the means and experience to cope far better with an unknown health threat such as a virus.

In a global pandemic, capitalism's ruthless competition is the greatest killer.

'U.S. Chernobyl': Why the U.S. failed and China won against COVID-19!

By: Lee Siu Hin
August 1, 2020, IACenter.org

WHAT's going on?

In January 2020, several cases of viral pneumonia of unknown origin were detected in the central Chinese city of Wuhan. No one knew exactly what the virus was, hence the vague identifier of "coronavirus" so popularly known today. Thousands of miles away in the U.S., when the virus was believed not to have reached its soil yet, right-wing U.S. elites, media, and politicians began using cruel words and ridicule against China, calling the virus "China's Chernobyl". U.S. Senator Tom Cotton, famous for his anti-China rhetoric, along with the right-wing media and the "liberal" *Washington Post*, began spreading the "Wuhan military lab-made virus" conspiracy theory.

I was in China at the time. As a Chinese-American community activist, I had been working and traveling between China and the U.S. for a bi-national solidarity activism project and working in the medical field. Due to the increased U.S. cold-war hostilities against China, we organized a 21-person U.K/U.S. activist delegation to China last December 2019 to January 2020. We traveled from Beijing along the Silk Road to Urumqi, China, the capital of Xingjian Uyghur Autonomous Region. Our main purpose was a fact-finding tour to fight U.S.-Western propaganda against China regarding Xingjian. We met many people and talked to Muslims and Uyghurs about the true situation.

It was right after the New Year 2020, on the tour bus to Dunhuang, China, when we heard the breaking story of the U.S. assassination of Iranian General Qasem Soleimani, and the small but developing news about a mysterious virus that broke out in Wuhan, China. By the time we returned to Beijing at the

end of the tour on January 7th, 2020 the situation in Wuhan seemed to be getting serious, with more and more local news coverage and public health warnings.

I stayed in China until January 20, 2020 and flew back to the U.S., 3-days before the Chinese government ordered Wuhan's lockdown and tens of thousands of medical workers were sent to the city. It became the biggest medical emergency mission in human history. Based on my medical experience, I knew it could develop into a health crisis, but no could expect a pandemic to emerge and become a major global crisis that would deeply affect each and every country. This was a turning point in history that occurred over the course of just a few weeks.

It seemed with every passing day less was known about the pandemic yet China beat the odds by completely containing the virus within 3 months. When the Wuhan lockdown officially ended on April 8, 2020, it marked the official end of the COVID-19 crisis in China. But no one could predict that the pandemic would spread rapidly to Europe or that the U.S. would become the COVID-19 epicenter of the world with nearly a quarter of call global cases and deaths.

Again, we need to ask: what's going on?

The success of China's struggle against the virus and the U.S.' failure, demonstrates the success of China's socialist system, and the failure and dysfunction of the U.S. capitalist system. It also shows that the arrogance of the U.S. from left to right, due to the ceaseless anti-communist cold war against China, meant that the U.S. could not put aside differences and learn from China's successful experience. This arrogance sent the U.S. into an abyss of corona disaster of hundreds of thousands of COVID-19 deaths, millions of cases, and trillions worth of economic losses with no end in sight.

The first reported case in Wuhan came at the height of China-U.S. tensions. There was a U.S.-instigated trade war and a U.S./Western-backed color-revolution in Hong Kong, China. The U.S. was routinely sending the naval carriers and war plans to the South China Sea. The U.S. mobilized its entire state machine against Huawei, Chinas bourgeoning telecom company. The U.S. Congress passed the so-called "Uyghur Human Rights

Policy Act of 2019" on December 3rd, 2019 in a blatant example of interference in China's Xingjian region.

Most of these U.S China-bashing campaigns have failed. The U.S. was forced to sign the trade accord with China to ease the trade war. Huawei didn't fall. Hong Kong police are now under new leadership that has cracked down and arrested thousands of neo-Nazi Hong Kong pro-independent rioters in mid-December, 2020. Additionally, no uprising occurred in Xingjian after U.S. political pressure. The D.C. elite certainly felt humiliated and defeated by China. Now they are furious.

Just like a money-losing gambler in desperate need of making, the coronavirus was the perfect bet for turning the table. Sinisterly calling it "China's Chernobyl," U.S. anti-communist war-monger imperialists painted a sick fantasy that mirrored the Soviet Union's Chernobyl nuclear disaster in 1986. They made accusations that China covered-up the problem. They hoped that China would have poor medical supports causing massive deaths— which would then lead to the country's economic collapse causing condemnation and isolation from the international community. This in turn would lead to mass anger and uprising, and finally to the collapse and overthrow of Communist China.

Ironically, China successively mobilized the masses to beat the virus quickly and effectively while the U.S. under the Trump regime led the country into total disaster. The US not only became the hardest hit country with the highest rate of infected people and the highest casualties, but the country has spiraled into economic collapse, massive unemployment, and has even been unable to provide enough personal protective equipment (PPE) for medical workers. COVID-19 is indeed the "U.S.'s Chernobyl".

But that's not the lowest. What do you mean here? Do you mean: That's not all?

Many U.S. corporations and the wealthy took the opportunity to profit from the crisis with Trump's help. The elites were given disproportionately huge sums of government funds to bail out their businesses and thus made "national crisis fortunes" from the disaster. On March, 27th, 2020 the President signed a two trillion dollar stimulus bill, the CARES Act, providing minuscule

payments to taxpayers while providing trillions in big business bailouts.

Stimulus funds for working people and small business such as the direct payments of $1,200 to most individuals who made up to $75,000, or $2,400 for couples making up to $150,000 and the expanded unemployment benefits that boosted the maximum benefit by $600 per week. There was also a $367 billion Paycheck Protection Program – PPP loan for small businesses, and the $150 billion for state and local governments for their virus fights. However, a much larger portion, nearly half of the bailout ($867 billion) was for corporate bailouts which included $500 billion in loans for large industries including $25 billion for passenger airlines, $4 billion for carriers, $3 billion for aviation contractors and $17 billion for "businesses critical to maintaining national security i.e. military contractors.

In addition, a $130 billion was earmarked for hospitals, but there is no clear indication how much of that money will be spent on treating the COVID-19 patients. In reality, many U.S. COVID patients received hundreds of thousands even million dollars medical bills after their treatment. The bailout was merely a crazy money grab-party for the richest 1% and the so-called "small" business, and the liberal Democrats who initially opposed the bill did so not because they're angry about corporate welfare, but because they wanted their own companies to be added to the list. Such bipartisanship made it increasingly clear that the rich do not care whether workers or the poor live or die.

Thanks to COVID-19, Amazon founder and CEO Jeff Bezos' fortune has increased to nearly $172 billion during due the pandemic, which has forced many people to stay at home and shopping online. While Bezos profited from the virus, his overworked employees went without proper pay and a lack of protective gear which caused hundreds of Amazon warehouse workers to fall ill to the virus. Eight Amazon workers have died. Bezos is not the only one who managed to increase his fortune while the deadly virus battered the global economy. In the past six months, the collective net worth of the 500 wealthiest people in the world rose from $5.91 trillion to $5.93 trillion, according to Bloomberg.

Yet while the rich feast, workers and "guest workers" in the food packing, meat and farm industries from south of the border are suffering. The greedy pursuit of profit by capitalist bosses cares nothing about the workers who produce our food. In Evansville, TN, every one of the 200 farmworkers there has tested positive for the virus. Southern New Jersey has seen hundreds of migrant farmworkers become infected with the virus. According to WHYY radio in Philadelphia, these workers are not covered by medical insurance and simply put, no one cares about them. In fact, no one knows exactly how many have been infected or died from the virus.

It's the same situation at meat and poultry processing facilities. According to CDC, between April and May 2020, 16,233 workers were infected in 239 facilities across the country, with 86 deaths.

Does the government protect them? No! According *CounterPunch*, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is leaving immigrants to die in detention, and retaliating when they speak out. At ICE detention centers, conditions of confinement put people at high risk for contracting the virus. As of May 31, 2020, ICE reported testing 2,781 out of approximately 24,700 people in its custody; 1,461 tested positive out of only 61 of their more than 200 facilities. Two people have died in ICE custody from COVID-19, and a third person reportedly died of COVID-19 shortly after release from detention. According to Vera, the actual number is 15 times higher than what ICE has reported to date. One group of researchers even concluded that 72 percent to nearly 100 percent of detained people may eventually be infected.

The lowest-paid workers are always the losers in the United States. This is true even the government employees. According to the latest government data on July 9, 2020, more than 1,018 out of 50,000 Transportation Security Administration (TSA) employees have tested positive for coronavirus and 6 have died.

Even more cruel and racist acts occurred when Trump blocked other countries from getting the much needed COVID-fighting medicines and equipment.

During a peak in COVID-19 cases, the U.S. put more

sanctions against Venezuela. Trump used at least $601 million out of an estimated $24 billion looted Venezuelan public money, frozen by the U.S. government, to build the border wall between the U.S and Mexico during this COVID-19 crisis, according to *The Grayzone*. Trump and his rich pals don't care about fighting the virus, they just want to rip-off as much profit as they can for their business interests.

As Chinese activist Zhang Weiwei puts it: "The difference between the Sino-US COVID-fight models is reflected in the specific guiding principles of the war against the virus. From the beginning in China, Chinese President Xi Jinping clearly put forward four requirements, strengthens confidence, work together, scientific prevention, and precise measures. I have always advocated observing the world with the eyes and standards of the Chinese. Many health experts wish to consider these four principles as four standards and see how the U.S. virus-fight has been carried out."

The first is "false confidence." From the beginning, the U.S. and some European countries brandished confidence; they cynically gloated that the outbreak was just a "China virus" that only affects Asians but not white people. They did not think preparation was needed, and if the virus spread to them than herd immunity would quickly dampen the impact. From Trump to Pelosi, left to right, few in the U.S. and the major European powers believed that a real virus war would be coming soon.

The second is "together in the same boat". As soon as the outbreak in Wuhan broke out, the slogan in all parts of China was "Wuhan refueling." All over the internet, netizens spread slogans such as support Wuhan with all your heart, support Hubei (Wuhan is the capital city of Hubei province), and the support the 42,000 medical personnel across the country working in Hubei to beat the virus.

The United States, on the contrary, has no such cultural tradition of "working together in the same boat", nor the institutional arrangements to facilitate the principle of "working together in the same boat". Individual states and the Federal Government have been involved in robbing masks, protective clothing, and ventilators from each other.

American politics is a "me-only" selfish identity politics, which has caused all kinds of resistance and social division during the virus crisis. Trump is not enthusiastic about supporting Democratic Party-led states, nor is the Democratic Party willing to listen to Trump's command. Even the simple public health requirement of wearing masks was highly politicized in the U.S.. Wearing masks has been labeled by the right-wing as a form of surrender to the Democratic Party and unpatriotic.

Such selfishness and ignorance lead to many idiotic actions across the U.S.; from the gun-carry anti-lockdown protests, anti-mask rage, to virus parties on college campuses: Early July 2020 a man in his 30s from San Antonio, Texas, died after going to a "COVID-19 party" to prove that the virus was a "hoax", according to the local *KENS5-TV* station.

The fundamental difference between the COVID-19 fights in China and the U.S. is this: China is fighting for the people no matter the cost, that's the reason China was able beat the virus in a short time with low casualities and protects the economy from long-term economic ruin.

On the other hand, U.S. leadership doesn't care about the people; it cares only about saving the capitalist financial bottom line. U.S. leadership gave up on saving people and even neglected to protect the elderly while racists blamed China for their miserable failure.

Many Chinese experts say that if U.S. and western countries acknowledged the "China standard", they would have been far better off and the pandemic might have been contained as it is in China.

Let's look at the numbers. By mid-July, the CDC reported daily infected cases in the U.S. of over 66,000 per day, almost the entirety of China's 84,000 infected cases that emerged between January-April, 2020.

On July 19th, 2020 U.S. COVID-19 infection had reached record-breaking 84,033, more then entire China's coronavirus infected numbers.

According to my compiled analysis, based on July 10th, 2020 COVID-19 data:

- The overall infection rate of China vs. U.S. (people infected/ total population X 100%) is 0.0061% vs. 0.9652%, death rate China vs. U.S. (dead/total population) is 0.000333 vs. 0.040736, which means a person in the U.S. has a 158 times higher chance of becoming infected and 122 times of being killed by the virus than a person living in China.
- If we consider a comparison based on population density (people infected/country area) it can be understood as how many chances you'll see your neighbor infected, and seeing them die. U.S. persons have a 38 times higher chance of seeing their neighbors infected, and 29.6 times higher chance of seeing them dying from COVID-19 than a Chinese neighbor.
- Expanding on this data, let's compare China with other major outbreak countries (with higher infection and death counts then China), mostly western developed countries. The number is even more staggering. Compared with China on infection rate and death rate: Brazil has a 141 times higher infection rate (IR) and 101 times death rate (DR) then China; Russia 89 times the IR and 101 times the DR; U.K has 72 IR and 204 DR times higher; Spain 89 IR and 183 DR times higher; Italy 66 IR and 174 DR higher; France 51 IR and 135 DR times higher.

In other words, a person in the U.S. especially in NYC, and most people from the western capitalist first world see no end to the virus in sight and are facing far more threat, stress and horror from the virus than a Wuhan resident faced during the peak of their outbreak.

With the COVID-fight successfully won in China, second waves prevented, and a quick economic rebound, many experts predict China will emerge from the coronavirus crisis stronger than the U.S. "The pandemic is going to reinforce that the United States is simply not the highly functional, advanced role model it used to be" said Edward Alden, a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, a traditional anti-communist/anti-China think-tank.

Many U.S. elites fear the COVID-19 pandemic may accelerate

America's declining status with traditional allies rather than the virus itself.

So, what is the U.S. planning to do? Just like any other imperialist power in history, the U.S. desperately chooses to launch an all-out assault against China. The U.S. capitalist system can always be counted on to prepare for war, just not for fighting COVID-19. They can neither lose face nor money—and choose a dirty fight and shameful denial instead.

While the U.S. faces tremendous public health and economic crises, the COVID-19 pandemic will cost the U.S. economy trillions and the global economy $21 Trillion. Still, the U.S. still considers building more bombs more important than human life.

On July 1st, 2020 whopping $740.5 billion military spending package was approved by the Democratic-controlled House Armed Services Committee and rubber-stamped by a GOP-controlled Senate Armed Services Committee rubber-stamp. Trump, considered by some on the left and the right to be anti-interventionist, did not hesitate to sign off on the package.

At the same time, after failing to spread the "Wuhan military lab China virus" conspiracy hoax, the U.S. capitalist elite from Trump to the DNC changed their tactic, pushing for overt war treat, sanctions, and covert intelligence campaigns against China.

On the military front, on July 3rd, 2020 the U.S. sent two aircraft carriers to the South China Sea for exercises even as China was holding drills nearby. This was a U.S. pointed "gun-boat" message to China that "The U.S. doesn't appreciate Beijing's military ramp-up in the region." According to a U.S. official quoted by *Wall Street Journal*.

Between July 6th to the 8th, 2020 the U.S. sent military aircraft to conduct close-up reconnaissance operations on China's southern coast, as close as 51.68 nautical miles from Guangdong coastal area, for three consecutive days.

Again on July 17th, 2020 USS Nimitz and USS Ronald Reagan, the two aircraft carrier battle groups, held another "dual carrier" exercise in the South China Sea; this is the second time the US military has held a "dual carrier" exercise in the South

China Sea within two weeks, according to the *China Global Times*.

By mid-July, 2020 there'd been at least five U.S. warships or spy planes identified in the South China Sea or near Chinese coastal area.

On the political front, on June 30, 2020, Chinese telecom giants Huawei and ZTE were officially designated "national security threats" by Federal Communication Commission (FCC). Huawei has been completely banned from the U.S. Meanwhile, the U.S. has succeeded in pushing the U.K. to drop Huawei from their construction of a 5G Network instead of offering help to fight their COVID-19 crisis, as the Chinese had just done for months by sending medical supplies.

Furthermore, instead of working on any legislative bills to reform the police force following the murder of George Floyd and the nationwide Black Lives Matter protests, the Senate on May 14, 2020 and the House on May 27, 2020 rushed to pass the "Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act" by a vote of 413–1. The bill was signed by Trump into law on June 17, 2020, it was written with the intention to undermine China's sovereignty over the Xingjian region.

In addition, on July, 2nd 2020, the Senate from liberal Democrats to right-wing GOPs, shamefully and unanimously passed the "Hong Kong Autonomy Act" (H.R. 7440), intended to destabilize Hong Kong, China. On July 14th, 2020 Trump signed the Hong Kong Sanctions bill, ending Hong Kong's special status. The U.S. also instituted a sweeping travel ban on Communist Party of China members.

As China Global Television Network (CGTN) reporter Liu Xin says: "The propaganda is working yet again, and it's so great that even the most obvious of hypocrisy goes unnoticed. I realize a lot of these examples might fall on deaf ears because we don't have enough distance from some of the stuff I'm talking about here like we already had with the Iraq war or maybe some of you are too young to remember the effects that the Iraq war propaganda had on us or maybe you still really believe you did the right thing and brought freedom and democracy to Iraq."

This should be a time when the world is comes together, for the time being, to fight COVID-19 rather than its hegemon states looking for someone to blame for the pain of the virus. We've seen the consequences of convincing themselves that China is an evil enemy who covered up COVID-19. And the world will not stop looking for what China has made available for everyone to fight the virus more effectively.

"The President of the United States was elected by capitalist power with who can push the right button. As many silly people as there are silly presidents. There is no stupid but more stupid." Liu continues. Many experts around the world have pointed out that Trump's approach is to divert contradictions and hope that the public will shift their attention to racism from the fact that they do not have the leadership or the will to enact an effective resistance to the pandemic. In other words, just blame China.

"Ideology is the most basic way of thinking for Americans. Regardless of the level of education, from the red neck in the bar to the professor in the school, talking about China and socialism are the same arrogance and prejudice." Liu concludes.

The U.S. and the American model has lost its grip over the narrative, making this period a moment of political, cultural and ideological reexamination.

We need to ask ourselves, from the COVID-19 fight, can the U.S. learn from China?

The U.S. speaks of human rights every day. Human rights are first and foremost the right to living. With so little effort given to protect the right to living in the U.S., it's a shame to hear U.S. politicians and even many Americans publicly stating that they have "given up the elderly" and even believe that "in order to protect the economy, the elderly should make sacrifices and give up treatment." The end result: tens of thousands of U.S. senior citizens in danger of being casualties within care facilities or in their own home without proper help.

We should learn from China's successful COVID-19 experience, investigate why Chinese socialism works, and do what we can to build international health solidarity.

Furthermore; there won't be health justice unless U.S.

sanctions against Venezuela, Cuba and Iran that block health and essential supplies to them are removed; and U.S. wars on Yemen, Iraq, and Afghanistan that destroy vital infrastructure are terminated. Let us not forget to call for an end to the U.S.-backed Israeli occupation and blockade against Palestine that has complicated the colonized nation's COVID-19 response.

It is no secret that domestically, police brutality and the war on terror is in fact just more oppression for Black and immigrant communities. There won't be health justice in the U.S. unless there is a people's revolution for fundamental social change that demands the moving of money and wealth from the richest 1% and the war back to the working class, people of color, immigrants and indigenous people.

With the Black Lives Matter protests appearing to be in the future of political life for some time to come, it is time to actively connect our struggle with others, whether it is racism with economic justice; wars in Africa to wars in the Americas, Asia, Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Palestine and Korea, or sweatshop exploitation in Los Angeles; the fight against international arms sales, child labor and child soldiers; or fighting AIDS and poverty at home. Only by linking all of our struggles together against our common enemy can we see a better future, together!

SECTION 1:
Warnings from China

China mobilizes to combat coronavirus

By Joshua Hanks
January 28, 2020, Workers World

SINCE A NEW strain of pneumonia-causing virus hit China in late December, there has been a massive response by the central and local governments.

On Dec. 31, China alerted the World Health Organization that it had detected a pneumonia-like illness in Wuhan, a city of 11 million people in central China's Hubei province.

By Jan. 7 the cause was identified as a novel coronavirus, dubbed 2019-nCoV, which is in the same family as the common cold and SARS. Two days later the Chinese Center for Disease Control had sequenced the entire genome of the virus, a rapidly achieved feat that will help scientists around the world more fully understand it.

A medical team from 51 medical institutions in Shaanxi leaves Xi'an for Wuhan.

For comparison, during the 2014 outbreak of Ebola in West Africa, it took scientists two months to completely sequence that virus's genome.

Data from Chinese scientists have been published in international medical journals, such as the New England Journal of Medicine and the Lancet, as well as in the domestic journal China Science Life Sciences.

China's response to the outbreak has been swift and massive. In cooperation with WHO and the international scientific community, it is taking this outbreak very seriously.

"Party committees and governments at all levels must take novel coronavirus outbreak prevention and control as the top priority of their work," said President Xi Jinping at a Jan. 25 meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, which set up a high-level task force to combat the virus. Led

by Premier Li Keqiang, the task force arrived in Wuhan on Jan. 26 to coordinate efforts to contain the outbreak. As of Jan. 27, the Ministry of Finance has allocated $8.74 billion to combat the virus.

Wuhan and several other cities have been put under partial quarantine, shutting down public transit and restricting travel by private cars, even as Chinese New Year/Spring Festival celebrations kicked off what is the largest annual human migration in the world.

This is an unprecedented response to a viral outbreak. Free-market capitalist countries have been inhibited from taking similar measures because of how greatly such a move would disrupt their markets and profits.

Huge government effort to contain the virus

The Spring Festival holiday will be extended, with schools and many public facilities remaining closed, to slow the spread of the virus. The China Banking and Regulatory Commission announced it is freezing payment obligations on mortgages, loans and credit cards for those who do not have an income due to the outbreak. This is unheard of in Western capitalist countries, where every flu season many are forced to go to work sick or face deep debts and even homelessness.

Over a thousand civilian medical workers have been sent to Wuhan from around the country, along with hundreds of medics from the People's Liberation Army. Another 12 teams with more than 1,600 medical workers are preparing to go there. As a whole in Hubei province, over half a million medical workers have been mobilized for epidemic prevention, control and treatment of patients.

The government plans to complete two entirely new hospitals in six to seven days to deal with patients, beating a previous record set in Beijing during the 2003 SARS outbreak. Using prefabricated buildings and an army of workers — who are being paid three times the usual wage — the Leishenshan Hospital will have nearly 1,500 beds, while the Huoshenshan hospital will have up to 1,000 beds.

The two new hospitals are being built by state-owned firms and financed by China's public banking system, allowing for a swift and coordinated response that can focus on meeting the public's needs instead of extracting short-term profits. Unlike capitalist companies, state-owned firms can operate at a loss.

State-owned Telecom China Mobile has set up a special 5G network in a Wuhan hospital to facilitate telemedicine, which will reduce exposure of medical workers to the virus. Factories have been ordered to massively increase production of medical supplies, like masks and gloves, after some shortages of these items were initially reported. Prices for these items spiked, but e-commerce giant Alibaba announced it would work to eliminate price hikes.

Two very different responses

No response to an outbreak like this will be perfect, but on-the-ground reports attest to the efficiency and seriousness with which it is being handled. This reporter spoke with Victoria Sinclair, a U.S. citizen living in the city of Dalian in northwest China. She said, "I've always been impressed with how quickly Chinese construction workers manage to work. Our highway was done in a few weeks, and I have no doubt the new hospitals they are building in Wuhan will be done quickly." Sinclair added, "The buses and subway are still running in our city, but they [workers] are taking extra precautions and sanitizing them twice daily."

Coverage in the Western media has been largely negative, portraying China's response as inept and lacking transparency, despite the central government calling on all cases of the virus to be immediately reported and several local officials in Wuhan facing repercussions for not acting swiftly enough. That doesn't sound like the central government is trying to cover up the outbreak; yet it has been a major talking point in Western reporting.

Despite the rapid and massive measures China has taken — only possible in a country with large amounts of public ownership, economic planning and leadership of the Communist Party — the Western media seem largely devoted to only criticizing China.

It should be remembered that the Reagan administration not only ignored the AIDS crisis in the 1980s but mocked and ridiculed the tens of thousands of people dying from that deadly disease. And during the 2017-18 flu season in the U.S., more than 60,000

people died — a fact rarely mentioned — which puts China's current outbreak into perspective.

The current U.S. flu season has already seen over 6,000 fatalities, presenting a much greater threat at present to public health than the coronavirus. Yet the Western corporate media, driven by an endless need for more viewers and more advertising revenue, choose to put forward a sensationalist narrative regarding China — to grab people's attention and generate more clicks.

Resurgence of diseases in U.S.

There has been a resurgence in the U.S. of leprosy and typhus in Los Angeles's homeless population and measles and mumps in unvaccinated people.

The U.S. actually has a lower vaccination rate than the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, which has a much smaller population and economy so it can spend much less on health care. A 2016 study published by the National Institutes of Health investigated vaccination rates of children living below the poverty line in four states and found that 40 percent had not received a single dose of the vaccine for rotavirus. Before introduction in 2006, rotavirus caused 20 to 60 deaths a year among children and up to 70,000 hospitalizations.

Racism is also apparent in how little concern Western reports seem to have for the well-being of non-Western people hit by a deadly viral outbreak. While the accidental burning of Notre Dame in Paris and the massive wildfires in Australia both brought out public displays of sympathy and huge donations from Western corporations and billionaires, China's coronavirus outbreak has not garnered the same sympathy and support.

This is the inevitable result of a new Cold War being waged against China as the imperialist West attempts to hold on to its position as the global power center.

How socialist base helps China combat coronavirus

By Sara Flounders
February 11, 2020, Workers World

CHINA IS SHOWING the world what is needed — and possible — to combat the outbreak of a new, highly contagious virus.

The steps China has taken around the coronavirus are unheard of in capitalist countries. They reaffirm the basic socialist character of the Chinese state. In a crisis or emergency, the welfare of the people comes before capitalist profits.

Chinese workers built the 1,000-bed Huoshenshan hospital in the city of Wuhan in 10 days.

A capitalist class exists in China. There are millionaires and even billionaires. But in a crisis, the Communist Party controls the state and has the leverage to make decisions not dictated by capitalist profits.

Starting three weeks ago, China imposed a limited quarantine on 35 million people in Wuhan city and Hubei province. That has now been extended far wider and restricts all unnecessary social interaction until more is known about the virus.

Lunar New Year celebrations were canceled nationwide. Schools, factories and workplaces were closed an additional week to control contagion. The whole population was asked to self-quarantine and limit social interaction. Only food deliveries and other essential services continued nationwide.

China has made an all-out effort to learn and share with the world the genome of the virus, how contagious it is, its symptoms, what organs it attacks, the mortality rate, and what treatments or combinations of treatments are most successful.

Why China is so concerned

Worldwide, influenza causes up to 5 million cases of severe illness annually, killing up to 650,000 people, according to the World Health Organization. Some viruses are new and more dangerous than others because humans are not yet immune to them and vaccines have not been developed to control their spread.

The H1N1 swine flu virus, which began in the U.S. in 2009 and spread worldwide, infected more than 1.63 million people and caused 284,500 deaths, with a fatality rate of 17.4 percent. No efforts were made by the U.S. government to slow the spread of this particularly dangerous flu, which especially targeted young people.

China's massive efforts around the current outbreak of the coronavirus, however, have restricted the fatality rate so far to around 2.1 percent — lower than usual for a new disease. By Feb. 1, the number of people cured in China exceeded the deaths, indicating that the epidemic is controllable. But it is not yet controlled, and determined work is continuing, including building solidarity with Wuhan.

Each day new medical teams go to Wuhan and Hubei from other parts of China. More than 6,000 medical staff arrived on Feb. 9, following a national call for "pairing-up support for Hubei." One-on-one support systems have been established in 16 provinces and municipalities to help cities in Hubei battle the epidemic.

Faster diagnosis and treatment plans are being aggressively tested and immediately disseminated worldwide.

U.S. has no policy

What China is doing stands in sharp relief to current U.S. policies. In an emergency or crisis in the U.S., maintaining property relations is the first and strongest consideration.

Time and again, National Guard units are mobilized to stop desperate people from "looting" stores for needed supplies or to keep people fleeing floods and earthquakes from moving into

unoccupied hotels and resorts. But no government measures are taken to stop businesses from hoarding, speculation and price hikes.

Even food, water, blankets and generators donated to charities can end up sitting in warehouses.

This happened when Hurricane Katrina flooded New Orleans in 2005, and happened again in the U.S. colony of Puerto Rico with the disastrous hurricanes of 2017 and recent earthquakes, as well as the fires in California in 2018 and 2019. Millions are left on their own to survive as best they can in armories and overcrowded stadiums. The Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Red Cross are immediately overwhelmed.

Those with resources can leave the area, try to rebuild their lives, file insurance claims and wait years for settlements. But orders to evacuate don't help people without cars or with nowhere to flee.

When a contagious virus causes a health crisis, millions still go to their jobs sick because more than 40 million workers in the U.S. lack paid sick leave. Staying home to care for sick family members means many workers are at risk of losing a job. Advice on what to do is limited to telling people to get a flu shot, along with a series of ads for cough drops and fever meds.

Spending government funds in preparation for an impending health crisis or natural disaster is just not on the U.S. agenda.

So far this winter the flu virus has sickened 22 million people in the U.S., with 210,000 hospitalizations and 12,000 deaths, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. But no special provisions are being made, even though the death toll here already far exceeds the 1,000 coronavirus deaths in China.

Hospital emergency rooms across the U.S. are already overwhelmed, according to the Feb. 8 New York Times. Vital medical supplies, including medications, ventilators and respirator masks, are in critically short supply. To maximize profits and cut costs, large for-profit medical conglomerates with hundreds of hospitals keep inventories of even basic items like masks, gowns and gloves in short supply.

The CDC says that 20 percent of people in the U.S. come down with the flu each winter. In a bad season, like the one in 2017-18, the flu killed more than 60,000.

But the idea of shutting down factories, schools, shopping malls, movie theaters, restaurants and sports arenas to save thousands of lives is inconceivable.

China shows the way

China just built two major hospitals in 10 days, with a combined capacity of 2,600 beds. It has mobilized thousands of health care workers. How? Through socialist planning and the cohesive leadership of the Communist Party.

Thousands of medical volunteers have responded to the government's call to assist in Wuhan. With mass transit shut down to lessen contagion, squads of free taxis are operating for those who need health care or shopping. Food is easily available and quickly delivered. Fresh fruits and vegetables are being shipped in. There are no desperate people breaking into shops for food.

As of Feb. 10, Beijing's vast subway system is operating again. Subway stations and train compartments are disinfected every hour.

China Global Television Network, CCTV English, Peoples Daily and Global Times provide up-to-date information. Coverage focuses on the role of science, technology and a broad-based people's campaign to adhere to the quarantine and observe strict health measures. The shortages, price spirals and mass chaos predicted by the U.S. media are not happening.

Why capitalism can't do this

When the Chinese government imposed a partial quarantine on the 35 million workers in Hubei province, it also declared that rent and payments on loans and credit cards were frozen.

Could a capitalist government do that? Would capitalist banks tolerate freezing credit card debt, car payments, insurance premiums and mortgages?

Would the mega sports entertainment industry tolerate canceling the Super Bowl or other professional sports events that generate billions in advertising revenue?

Would landlords, large or small, tolerate freezing rent payments? Would corporate giants allow major factories to temporarily close when profitable orders were waiting to be filled? Every week that Chinese factories are closed cuts $26 billion in world trade. (New York Times, Feb. 8)

Would the pharmaceutical industry allow essential medicines to be distributed at cost or free? This industry is the most profitable sector of the U.S. economy, with the highest prescription drug costs in the world. Millions of adults in the U.S. skip their medications due to high prices, according to Harvard Health Reports.

But rather than spend billions to improve health care or basic infrastructure, Washington lavishes money on military bases to surround China and new weapons to threaten the world.

Workers here need to know the truth about China and demand the levels of health care, monitoring and national planning that everyone has a right to expect.

Report from China: COVID-19 a tale of two systems

By Robert Hayes
March 17, 2020, FightBack!News

An in-depth look at two very different responses to the COVID-19 outbreak in the United States and China

GUANGDONG, CHINA - There is chaos in America right now surrounding COVID-19. Americans are receiving conflicting information every day about the virus, with no direction from the Trump administration. The Trump administration has decided that the best course of action is to do nothing, with Trump himself declaring "I don't take responsibility at all." When the Center for Disease Control (CDC) releases a report, Trump will directly contradict their findings in an attempt to downplay COVID-19's immediate threat and bolster his own image. The resulting pandemonium has left Americans without guidance on how they should protect themselves and their families against this very deadly disease.

Here in China, I witnessed a much more concerted response to COVID-19. China's centrally planned socialist system allowed for widespread and identical action in every single city. Entire cities were required to undergo quarantine, as businesses and restaurants were told to shut their doors. Only essential services like grocery stores and pharmacies were required to remain open. Through the aid of the government, these places experienced very few shortages and kept their shelves full. Everyone was required to wear a medical face mask if going out in public, and there were temperature checks at the entrance of every building. Entire hospitals in heavily afflicted areas were constructed in as little as 10 days. The government also guaranteed to pay for the full cost of testing and treatment for anyone infected with the virus. For those uninfected but forced to stay home during the

quarantine, China also made it compulsory for businesses to pay their employees like normal.

The United States, with its absent leadership and for-profit healthcare system, is taking none of these steps on a national level. At the same point of the virus's timeline that we're now at in the United States, China already had entire cities under quarantine. For comparison, testing in the U.S. has been pathetic, where they only tested 77 people this last week. Trump has already said that even if a vaccine were to be released, our for-profit system wouldn't guarantee it would be available to everyone. Without access to guaranteed sick leave, working-class people are forced to make the difficult choice between remaining at work and exposing themselves to the virus or staying at home with their families while earning no income.

Instead, the Trump administration's response to the outbreak has been solely focused on propping up Wall Street. The Federal Reserve released $1.5 trillion in stimulus to prop up a zombie bull market, with seemingly no effect as shareholders continued to shed assets. Trump has also implemented a strict 30-day travel ban from Europe, creating chaos at airports that saw places like Chicago O'Hare dangerously jam-packed with Americans trying to return home and risking spread of the virus. Trump's response to the outbreak has been so catastrophic that Americans can't even get the simplest things like consistent information about the virus.

One of the most underrated parts of the Chinese government trying to limit the virus's spread was a massive public safety awareness campaign. Every day I received multiple text messages with updates about the outbreak. Every major Chinese app, such as WeChat and Meituan, had a section about the virus with statistics about it, if there were cases near you, and what vital information you should know in order to protect yourself. There were signs in every apartment building about how to wash your hands, what you should do to self-quarantine, and what kinds of supplies you should have on hand. Many places even required you to register in an app with your recent travel and health information before you were allowed entry.

The United States' messy capitalist system has made it

so that there is no such widespread and effective campaign designed to protect working-class people. As such, many are without guidance at the moment. In a return to an almost feudalistic society, states and cities are left to fend for themselves and make up their own public safety policies. So here are some tips that I learned from China's carefully coordinated response to the epidemic:

1. Stay calm -- Mass panic buying only leaves fewer supplies for people who need it. The virus needs to be taken seriously, but level heads allow us to combat it more easily. Hoarding things like toilet paper or face masks helps no one; take only what you need. You should be buying canned goods, non-perishables, and any prescription medications you might need in case you need to quarantine. Think of it like preparing for a hurricane or a major snowstorm.
2. Wash your hands -- Do it for at least 20 seconds with soap and water. This is the best tool you can use to help prevent getting it yourself. We use our hands for everything, and just about any time you touch an outside surface somewhere, you should wash your hands. Cough or sneeze into a tissue or your sleeve, not your hands. Carry hand sanitizer with you in case you can't get to a bathroom quickly. If you've been handling anything others may have used, like a shopping cart or a door handle, don't touch your face until you can wash your hands. Also disinfect your phone. They're one of the most unclean things we handle on a daily basis.
3. Assume everyone has the disease by now -- This isn't to say that everyone does actually have it, but you should be living under the assumption that everyone you come into contact with already does. The amount of testing done in the U.S. is a disgrace at best and a human rights violation at worst. Thousands of people we don't know about already have it, so you should assume it's around you already and take the necessary precautions. Even if your city is only reporting a handful of cases, we just don't know because of how people travel. Someone

could have caught it in Seattle and then traveled to Miami where they are now spreading it. Just try and keep your distance.

4. Don't go to crowded places -- While those cheap plane tickets might seem alluring, just don't do it. Airports are the last place you want to be right now. Crowded places also include things like restaurants and movie theaters - anything that has you in close proximity to other people. Avoid them for now. Although it's painful for many, it's a good thing that major outlets such as the NBA or Broadway are suspending or canceling their activities. We are talking about an epidemic here. Social events such as weddings, parties, or even children's play dates should also be postponed.
5. If you think you're sick, please do not go out in public -- Symptoms of COVID-19 include high fever, dry cough, and shortness of breath. If you're suddenly experiencing any of these, stay home. For many the symptoms might be mild, but to others they are deadly. Avoid spreading it to other people if you think you might be sick. This is why you should have food supplies and medication at the ready in case you need to stay home for an extended period of time. We are herd animals and we need to protect the weakest among us. Only go to a doctor if you have very severe symptoms and inform them of your situation beforehand.

These tips were just a few examples of the widespread information China provided to every one of its citizens. Due to the rudderless leadership of the Trump administration, the United States is still unable to effectively provide even the most basic information to its people. These two systems' responses to the COVID-19 outbreak could not be more diametrically opposed.

In China, its socialist system provided a meticulous, centrally planned response that completely suffocated the epidemic and protected its people. Things are finally returning to normal here only because of the carefully organized actions from the government. Meanwhile in the U.S., its capitalist system continues to haphazardly and inefficiently combat the outbreak

which is quickly spiraling out of control. The U.S. would be well served in following the shining example from China and developing a universal healthcare system that puts the needs of its people over the profits of wealthy corporations.

Coronavirus highlights gap between socialist and capitalist responses

By Joshua Hanks
March 10, 2020, Workers World

MARCH 9 — Mounting concern and panic over the global outbreak COVID-19 has gripped headlines as more countries grapple with its spread. Over 100,000 people worldwide have been confirmed positive for the virus, with many more cases surely going undetected. Italy has declared a travel ban in the entire country, and other countries are considering drastic responses.

In China, thousands of recovered patients are going home and the number of new virus cases has fallen dramatically.

The Western media focused for months on China's response, often condemning it as authoritarian and downplaying its effectiveness. Yet it has become clear that China's unprecedented quarantines, rapid construction of new hospitals, huge increase in testing capabilities and production of medical supplies, free testing and treatment, and mass mobilizations of medical workers, People's Liberation Army soldiers and Communist Party members have succeeded in slowing the spread of the virus and reducing infections.

China's ability to take steps based on human need rather than by seeking to maximize profit has given it an advantage in combating the epidemic.

Praise for China's approach

In a March 4 interview with the New York Times, Dr. Bruce Aylward, part of the WHO team that visited China in February, said, "A rapidly escalating outbreak has plateaued, and come down faster than would have been expected. Back of the envelope, it's hundreds of thousands of people in China who did not get COVID-19 because of this aggressive response."

He added, "China is really good at keeping people alive. Its hospitals looked better than some I see here in Switzerland. We'd ask, 'How many ventilators do you have?' They'd say, '50.' Wow! We'd say, 'How many ECMOs?' They'd say, 'Five.'" (ECMOs are machines that circulate blood outside the body for oxygenation.)

"The [Chinese] government made it clear: testing is free," Aylward pointed out. He noted if you tested positive for COVID-19 when your insurance ended, the state picked up all costs, and that in the U.S., personal cost is a barrier to speedy treatment: "That's what could wreak havoc. This is where universal health care coverage and security intersect."

Asked if China's response was "possible only because China is an autocracy," Dr. Aylward replied, "I talked to lots of people outside the system — in hotels, on trains, in the streets at night. They're mobilized, like in a war, and it's fear of the virus that was driving them. They really saw themselves as on the front lines of protecting the rest of China. And the world."

Sylvie Briand, director of Infectious Hazard Management at the WHO, told reporters, "Measures on movement restriction have delayed the dissemination of the outbreak two or three days within China and a few weeks outside China." (cgtn.com, Feb. 19)

High-cost response in the U.S.

The U.S. response to growing numbers of COVID-19 cases contrasts with China's. In a Feb. 26 press conference, Vice President Mike Pence, who has no medical training and was governor of Indiana during one of that state's worst HIV outbreaks, was tapped by President Trump to direct the federal government's response.

During the press conference, Trump made several misleading and outright false claims that contradict the government's own scientists. He claimed that cases are "going very substantially down, not up" and that the U.S. is "rapidly developing a vaccine" and "will essentially have a flu shot for this in a fairly quick manner."

The director of the National Institutes of Allergy and Infectious

Diseases, Dr. Anthony Fauci, however, stated that a vaccine won't be ready for another 12 to 18 months. Health Secretary Alex Azar refused to say that a potential vaccine would be affordable for all. This mirrors other parts of the high-cost U.S. health care system.

At the March 3 White House press conference, CNN correspondent Jim Acosta tweeted: "WH is allowing only still photos of this Coronavirus briefing. No audio or video permitted." A week earlier the administration sought to lock down information about the outbreak, instructing scientists to coordinate all statements and public appearances with Pence.

Federal agencies are wholly unprepared for an epidemic of this scale. There are nearly 700 vacancies at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention due to a freeze in hiring Trump initiated to cut costs. Public health agencies across the board have suffered from funding cuts for years.

In 2018 Trump slashed 80 percent of the budget from the CDC program to prevent global disease outbreaks and disbanded the government's global health security team created to lead the U.S. response in a pandemic.

With nothing to back him up, Pence promised that the U.S. would be capable of performing over 1.5 million tests a week. The actual numbers are far lower. Washington state, which reported the most cases as of March 8, can perform a little over 1,000 tests a day. Oregon can only test 40 a day, while Arkansas can test just four or five. Earlier this week the CDC announced it would stop reporting how many tests it has performed.

Statements about tests have omitted reporting that, in order to confirm a positive result, a person must be tested twice. A state conducting 1,000 tests a day can only test 500 people. The country's true testing capability is unclear, leaving the public in the dark as to just how widespread the virus has become.

The failure of capitalist health care

The slow, botched and opaque response of the Trump administration contrasts with China's rapid response that has slowed the spread of disease within its borders.

The U.S., with a larger but completely capitalist economy, has failed to do what China has done on its road to socialism. U.S. government officials seem more concerned with how the stock market and quarterly profits will be affected than with public health.

China's quarantines and other measures negatively impacted its economy, yet China's steps against the virus protected the health of millions of people — within China and around the world.

The capitalist U.S. seemingly cannot, or will not, prioritize the health of even the people living within its borders.

Karl Marx in Wuhan: how Chinese socialism is defeating COVID-19

By Carlos Martinez
March 25, 2020, Popular Resistance

THE INITIAL OUTBREAK of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) took place in the Chinese city of Wuhan, the capital of Hubei province, in early January 2020. The epidemic was limited almost entirely to China until a month later, when it flared up in Iran, South Korea, Japan and Italy. By 11 March, it was clear that sustained community-level transmission of the virus was occurring in multiple regions of the world, and the World Health Organisation (WHO) declared it a pandemic. With the virus spreading throughout Europe and North America, there is now a serious possibility that COVID-19 will infect a large proportion of the global population and cause the early death of millions of people. It is a global health emergency of almost unprecedented proportions.

China's successes containing the virus

In the absence of a vaccine or cure, the only way [1] to defeat a viral epidemic is to drastically reduce contagion, and this is achieved through rigorous testing, contact tracing, isolation of patients, and social distancing for the wider population.

Once it understood the nature and scope of the crisis, the Chinese government took swift, uncompromising action. A total lockdown was imposed in Hubei, the epicenter of the outbreak, on 23 January, at which point there were around 800 confirmed cases. Tens of millions of people were required to stay indoors. Schools and workplaces were closed, and sporting and cultural events were cancelled. In the words of Bruce Aylward [2], epidemiologist and senior advisor to the Director General of WHO, "old-fashioned public health tools" were deployed "with a rigor

and innovation of approach on a scale that we've never seen in history."

The report of the WHO-China Joint Mission [3], conducted in late February, concluded that "in the face of a previously unknown virus, China has rolled out perhaps the most ambitious, agile and aggressive disease containment effort in history." The report noted that up-to-date public health information was regularly and widely distributed through multiple channels; there was a coordinated nationwide effort to get sufficient medical supplies to Hubei, and local authorities worked to ensure a stable supply of basic goods and to prevent speculation and hoarding.

The government announced immediately that testing and treatment – including expensive and sophisticated techniques such as extracorporeal membrane oxygenation [4] – would be free to all [5], and it immediately introduced various measures to mitigate the effect on people's daily lives (for example pausing mortgage and credit card payments [6], and providing subsidies [7] to ensure continued payment of wages). Food shopping moved completely online, and provincial authorities and Communist Party of China (CPC) local branches coordinated to ensure every home received food packages and that people on medication received their prescriptions.

More than 30,000 doctors and nurses were sent to Wuhan [8] from across China. Forty-five hospitals were designated as COVID-19 treatment centers, 12 temporary hospitals were converted from exhibition centers and similar buildings, and two brand new hospitals (with a capacity of 1,000 and 1,300 beds) were constructed from the ground up [9] in a matter of days. The health system prioritized keeping people alive, scaling up the production of ventilators and adding capacity across the range of treatment and detection options. Dr Aylward remarked [10]: "the Chinese are really good at keeping people alive with this disease."

Public health officials attempted to trace every single confirmed case, and then tested everyone that had come into contact with the infected person, in line with the WHO's clear message [11] to "test, test, test".

China's containment effort has been facilitated by the extensive

use of advanced technology [12]. Temperature checking stations have been set up throughout the country, and people have been asked to install a smartphone app that provides information, allows users to check and report symptoms, and enables the health authorities to monitor the spread of the disease.

Artificial intelligence is being widely deployed [13]; for example, a prediction model "is helping health care authorities in Chongqing and Shenzhen predict outbreaks ahead of time with accuracy rates of more than 90 per cent." Meanwhile Chinese tech giants have made crucial services available for the fight against COVID-19. "Alibaba Cloud has offered AI computing capabilities to public research institutions for free to support virus gene sequencing, new drug R&D and protein screenings. Baidu has opened up LinearFold, its RNA prediction algorithm, to genetic testing agencies, epidemic prevention centers and research institutes around the world. Neusoft Medical donated high-end CT scanners, AI medical imaging, cloud platform and remote advanced post-processing software to hospitals in Wuhan."

Robots have been put to use [14] delivering meals to people under quarantine. Huawei and China Telecom worked together to set up a 5G-enabled remote video diagnostic center [15], enabling medical staff to conduct remote online consultations.

In a clear sign of its commitment to international cooperation to contain the virus, the Chinese Centre for Disease Control sequenced the entire COVID-19 genome and published it within a few days of the virus being identified. By comparison, it took two months for the genome to be sequenced during the 2014 Ebola outbreak.

China's "incredibly difficult measures [16]" were recognized by the WHO as having probably prevented hundreds of thousands of cases. The crisis reached its peak in early February, when new confirmed cases were increasing at a rate of around 3,000 per day. The curve started to flatten in mid-February, and was almost completely flat by the beginning of March: in the first three weeks of March, case numbers increased from 80,026 to 81,008, and at the time of writing (in late March), almost all new cases in China are imported rather than domestically transmitted.

Containment measures successfully prevented any really serious outbreak in China outside Hubei [17]. The worst affected province after Hubei has been Guangdong, a vast province of 113 million people in Southern China, whereby late March there had been around 1,400 confirmed cases and just eight deaths. At the time of writing, two of the provinces neighboring Hubei, Hunan and Anhui, have zero active confirmed cases.

With the outbreak clearly under control in China, lockdown measures are being eased and people are starting to return to normal life [18], while remaining vigilant to the possibility of a resurgence of the virus. China's extraordinary response to COVID-19, although it came at significant economic and human cost, has provided an indispensable lesson to the rest of the world in how to tackle this pandemic. An epidemiological analysis in The Lancet stated [19]: "What has happened in China shows that quarantine, social distancing, and isolation of infected populations can contain the epidemic. This impact of the COVID-19 response in China is encouraging for the many countries where COVID-19 is beginning to spread."

The response in the capitalist west has been far less impressive

One important effect of China's drastic containment measures was to slow down the global spread of the virus, giving other countries time to prepare. In Vietnam, and also in China outside Hubei, cases numbers have been very low, since fairly severe containment measures were introduced early on.

However, given COVID-19's high contagion rate and China's level of connectedness with the rest of the world, it was inevitable that COVID-19 would spread globally unless other countries took suitable precautionary measures. By the middle of February, there were outbreaks in Japan and South Korea, both of which fairly quickly implemented wide-scale testing, isolation and containment, and both of which are seeing a significant downturn in cases.

The epicenter of the pandemic is now Europe, with Italy, Spain, Germany, France, Switzerland, Netherlands, Belgium,

Norway and Denmark experiencing serious outbreaks that haven't as yet managed to break the exponential growth in case numbers. All these countries have now imposed lockdowns and are responding in a reasonably aggressive way, but the trajectory of the statistics indicates that the response has been "too little, too late". The number of COVID-19 cases per capita is far higher in Western Europe than in China (as of 24 March, there are 1,057 cases per million people in Italy and 1,016 per million in Switzerland, compared with 56 per million in China).

Given that the rest of the world had several weeks' advance notice of the impending crisis, countries (particularly wealthy countries with the necessary resources) should have started taking precautionary measures by late January. They should have ensured they had a sufficient supply of test kits, ventilators, masks and protective clothing; they should have added human and physical capacity to their healthcare systems; and they should have put systems in place to mitigate the harmful impact of any lockdown. As John Ross points out [20], "while China benefited greatly from determined action against the virus, the facts show the West entirely wasted this precious time."

The most shamefully irresponsible and inept responses thus far are to be found in Britain and the United States. With case numbers creeping up, by mid-to-late February it was obvious that an outbreak was developing, yet it took another month for those countries to start introducing containment measures, and these have thus far been woefully insufficient [21].

Donald Trump went from denying there was any problem [22] – "we have it totally under control; it's one person coming in from China and we have it under control. It's going to be just fine" – to claiming that nobody could have seen the crisis coming [23]. On 6 March he said "this is something that you can never really think is going to happen. What a problem. Came out of nowhere." This is patently absurd. While non-specialists might not have understood the seriousness of the threat, there was no shortage of well-respected scientists raising the alarm, and indeed Trump was briefed by US intelligence agencies [24] on the issue from late January onwards.

After the first handful of cases, the governments in Britain

and the US should have set up free and easily-accessible testing facilities for those with symptoms; they should have set up quarantine facilities for those that tested positive; they should have given advice and provided support for self-isolation of older and immuno-compromised people, as well as those with underlying conditions that make them more vulnerable to the disease. They should have started building healthcare capacity; they should have put contingency plans in place for closing schools and public spaces and for ensuring the steady supply of basic goods in case of a lockdown.

In the event, the British government barely commented on COVID-19 until the second week of March, by which time there had already been several hundred confirmed cases (and almost certainly tens of thousands of unconfirmed cases). In open defiance of WHO recommendations, Britain's chief medical adviser Chris Whitty stated [25] that it wasn't necessary to do widespread testing: "we will move from having testing mainly done in homes and outpatients and walk-in centers, to a situation where people who are remaining at home do not need testing". Prime Minister Boris Johnson suggested [26] that perhaps the country needed to "just take it on the chin", let everyone get ill and accept that large numbers of people will die.

A couple of days later, this policy of criminal negligence was dressed up in scientific clothing by calling it 'herd immunity', a hypothesis that was quickly, comprehensively and unceremoniously debunked [27]. Herd immunity "would require a significant proportion of the population to be infected and recover from COVID-19. Achieving herd immunity would require well over 47 million people to be infected in the UK." This could well result in over a million deaths and several more million hospitalisations. As Jeremy Rossman, senior lecturer in virology at the University of Kent, points out [28], "we can and we must do better than that. China is rapidly controlling the spread of COVID-19 without requiring herd immunity (only 0.0056% of its population has been infected)."

Under intense popular pressure, the British government finally closed schools, public spaces, restaurants, cafes, clubs and pubs on 20 March. A rescue package has been announced

to compensate businesses and workers for loss of income (although at the time of writing this doesn't extend to millions of casual, temporary and self-employed workers). However, the measures fall far short of what was introduced and proven to work in China at a much earlier stage in the virus's progression. The government's top advisers have said that 20,000 deaths from COVID-19 would be a best-case scenario [29], and analysis [30] by researchers at UCL and Cambridge indicates that the current strategy is likely to cause between 35,000

and 70,000 excess deaths. This is especially shocking in light of the fact that China's death toll will probably not exceed 4,000. Given China's population is 21 times the size of Britain's, that means Britain's likely death rate for COVID-19 is in the order of 300 times higher than China's. And rather than adding the vast capacity needed by the National Health Service to provide adequate testing and treatment (not to mention the personal protective equipment [31] needed by health workers), the government is apparently more focussed on constructing temporary morgues [32].

It's all too obvious that the reluctance to adequately deal with the crisis at hand is based on economic concerns. Indeed the prime minister's chief adviser, Dominic Cummings, was reported [33] as saying "protect the economy and if that means some pensioners die, too bad." This is an idea that seems to have resonated on the other side of the Atlantic [34]. GDP growth in Britain is practically zero and crashing out of the EU at the end of the year is poised to push the economy into recession. A period of COVID-19 lockdown will of course significantly reduce economic activity and therefore affect profits, and it's precisely this factor that explains the shamefully lackadaisical response of the British government in the face of a pandemic.

Under socialism, people come before profit

"Our greatest strength lies in our socialist system, which enables us to pool resources in a major mission. This is the key to our success." (Xi Jinping)

Why has the response to COVID-19 been so much more thorough and successful in China than in the capitalist West? How is it possible that China – a developing country with a per capita GDP of just over $10,000 (less than 20 percent of the US figure) – is able to limit the spread of the disease to less than 0.01 percent of its population, while rich countries like Britain are talking about 'herd immunity'?

As Indian communist Siteram Yechury memorably put it [35], "in the final analysis, it boils down to the question of who controls the state or whose class rule it is. Under bourgeois class rule, it is profit indicators that are the driving force. Under working class rule, it is society's responsibilities that are the priorities." The legendary South African freedom fighter Chris Hani made a similar point [36]: "Socialism is not about big concepts and heavy theory. Socialism is about decent shelter for those who are homeless. It is about water for those who have no safe drinking water. It is about healthcare, it is about a life of dignity for the old. It is about overcoming the huge divide between urban and rural areas. It is about a decent education for all our people."

In short, China is responding in such a responsible and effective manner to the COVID-19 pandemic because it's a socialist country and its government is primarily accountable not to capital but to the people. The non-negotiable top priority of the government is "meeting people's needs [37], ranging from those in education, employment, social security, medical services, housing, environment, to intellectual and cultural life." Once it became clear that fighting COVID-19 meant choosing between saving millions of lives or protecting economic growth, China came down unambiguously on the side of saving lives.

Further, China's relatively centralized system of economic control means that it can mobilize vast resources very quickly. As an analyst for the Council on Foreign Relations grudgingly observes [38], the Chinese state "can overcome bureaucratic nature and financial constraints and is able to mobilise all of the resources." Similarly, CNN couldn't but admit [39] that China's ability "to pull something like this off is thanks to the ability of a centralized, powerful leadership to react in a crisis."

China certainly doesn't have any shortage of private capital

these days, but its economic strategy is nonetheless directed by the state. The government maintains tight control over the most important parts of the economy – the 'commanding heights': heavy industry, energy, finance, transport, communications, and foreign trade. Finance – which has a key influence over the entire economy – is dominated by the 'big four' state-owned banks, accountable to the Chinese government and people. Private production is encouraged to the extent (and only to the extent) that it contributes to modernization, technological innovation, employment and improvement in living standards.

In capitalist countries, governments are essentially under the control of capital; in socialist countries, capital is essentially under the control of the government. As Eric Li put it [35], "There's no way a group of billionaires could control China's politburo as billionaires control American policy making." Communist Party rule means that the government can take the decision to privilege the interests of human life over those of capital, and the owners of capital have no option but to go along with that, even where it means having their property seized [40].

Indeed, many big Chinese companies have put their services at the disposal of the fight against the virus. An article [15] on the World Economic Forum blog notes that "corporations including Alibaba, Baidu, Bank of China, ByteDance, China Construction Bank, China COSCO Shipping Corporation, China Merchants Group, Envision Energy, Fosun Group, Guangzhou Pharmaceutical, JD.com, Mengniu, PingAn, SinoChem, Sinopec, Tai Kang Insurance, Tencent, Xiaomi, Yili and others have donated large volumes of healthcare, food and other supplies to the affected areas. Manufacturers including BYD, Foxconn, Guangzhou Automobile Group Co. and SAIC-GM-Wuling are setting up makeshift assembly lines to produce additional masks and disinfectants." Other companies have provided autonomous robots for delivery of supplies to patients under quarantine.

China's response to the pandemic has seen the extensive use of cutting-edge technology, incorporating the latest developments in artificial intelligence, robotics [41] and medical imaging [42]. It's also well ahead of the curve when it comes to things like online shopping, cashless payment and remote education.

This video [43] gives a fascinating insight into how these technologies are being leveraged to enforce containment measures in Nanjing.

Veteran science writer Philip Ball noted recently [44] that, in several fields of science and technology, "China is starting to set the pace for others to follow. On my tour of Chinese labs in 1992, only those I saw at the flagship Peking University looked comparable to what you might find at a good university in the west. Today the resources available to China's top scientists are enviable to many of their western counterparts."

Given the level of scientific backwardness, generalized poverty and ignorance prevailing at the time of the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, it is nothing short of incredible that China has emerged as a world leader in science and technology. That it has done so is testament to the systematic efforts and strategic vision of its socialist leadership.

Another aspect of Chinese socialism that's proving invaluable in the present crisis is the existence of an enormous, highly competent and well-organized communist party, which has activists in all neighborhoods and workplaces. CPC branches have taken the lead in terms of ensuring that people's basic needs are met while they're stuck at home, coordinating deliveries of food and medicine. Millions of CPC members across the country have volunteered for this work, the need for which was emphasized [45] by Xi Jinping back in January: "Party committees and governments at all levels must take novel coronavirus outbreak prevention and control as the top priority of their work."

A further key difference between China and the major western capitalist countries is that the working classes of Europe and the US have been facing neoliberal austerity for the last decade. Health services and social services have taken a battering. The COVID-19 death rate in Italy and Spain is far higher than in China, in spite of Italy and Spain being much wealthier in per capita income terms. The testing rate, treatment rate, provision of information, distribution of food, care for the elderly and vulnerable, transfer of compensatory payments and mental health support is all far better in China than in Europe and North America.

There's been no austerity in China; quite the opposite. Real

wages have more than doubled in the last decade, and the welfare state has been ramped up massively. The rollout of universal health coverage over the last 15 years has been described [46] by the World Bank as "unparalleled," and represents "the largest expansion of insurance coverage in human history". The number of hospital beds per 1,000 people [47] (4.34) is significantly higher than the OECD average (2.9), the US (2.7) or the UK (2.5). This is clearly an important part of China's ability to minimize the harm caused by the epidemic.

China's Internationalism

The basic dichotomy of global politics in the current era is, on the one hand, US efforts to re-assert its global hegemony through coercion and bullying, and on the other, China's commitment to "peace, development and win-win cooperation [48]" and the construction of a multipolar world.

China saw its first internationalist duty in relation to COVID-19 as being containment of the outbreak in Hubei, thereby buying the rest of the world time to take pre-emptive measures. Martin Jacques, author of the best-selling When China Rules the World, explains [49]: "We must remember that this was a new virus that no-one knew anything about. China was, if you like, the guinea pig. China's problem and everyone else's problems were fundamentally different. China was faced with a new virus. Everyone else can learn from China. Because of China they know what the coronavirus is. They don't have to start all over again."

By early March, the outbreak in China was basically under control but the situation was deteriorating quickly in Iran, Italy, Spain and elsewhere. China made it clear [50] that it was ready to offer support at every level to other countries suffering outbreaks, as well as collaborating with companies and research institutes worldwide in the development of vaccines and treatments. It has sent medical teams and vast quantities of supplies – millions of surgical masks, hundreds of thousands of testing kits, tens of thousands of ventilators – to countries around the world, including Italy [51], Spain [52], Iran [53], Cambodia [54], Venezuela [55], Cuba [56], the Philippines , France [58], Iraq [59], Serbia [60] and Poland [61].

Chinese health experts have been coordinating closely [62] with the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention in order to help prepare the continent for quick and decisive action against the pandemic. The Jack Ma Foundation, coordinating with the Ethiopian government, has agreed [63] to send 100,000 face masks, 20,000 test kits and 1,000 medical use protective suits to every country in Africa.

While China sends aid and solidarity to all corners of the globe, the US continues to impose punishing sanctions on countries that refuse to bend to its will. China has joined the calls for sanctions against Iran [64] and Venezuela [65] to be lifted. Pointing to the inhumanity of imposing sanctions at such a time, Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Geng Shuang stated: "At this critical juncture where all governments and people across the world are fighting the pandemic, the US is still stubborn in sanctioning Venezuela, showing not the least respect for humanitarianism."

Learn from China

In the first three weeks of March, the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in China increased from 80,026 to 81,054 (1.3 percent). The cases in the rest of the world during the same time period increased from 8,559 to 223,982 (2,516 percent) and continue to rise fast. China's case graph looks like the top-left quadrant of a circle; Europe and North America's case graph looks the bottom-right quadrant.

Clearly, now is the time to learn from China rather than engage in China-bashing. Any government currently facing an outbreak and not actively learning from China's success is committing a very serious crime against its population. Unfortunately, the combination of racism and anti-communism prevailing in the West – a toxic mix of yellow peril and red scare – makes it difficult for governments and media outlets to acknowledge China's efforts.

Numerous articles have fretted [66] about the violation of rights involved in locking down Chinese cities. Human Rights

Watch chief Kenneth Roth stated [67] in early February that "quarantines of this sort typically don't work. This is not a rights-oriented approach to public health. This is treating public health with a sledgehammer." A few weeks later, with Wuhan having defeated its outbreak and with cities throughout Europe imposing lockdowns, these comments only serve as yet more proof of Roth's ignorance and pro-imperialist bias.

Donald Trump has stoked up anti-China sentiment and anti-Asian racist hysteria by insistently referring [68] to COVID-19 as "the China Virus". Like any virus, COVID-19 is essentially a blob of nucleic acid and as such can't be considered as having a nationality, but this is not the point. Trump's reactionary statements are deliberately designed to push the blame for the pandemic onto China, to deflect from China's successful containment measures and to therefore explain away the US's failures.

John Ross writes [69] that "instead of learning the positive lessons of China's ability to control the virus, the Western media and the US government engaged in anti-China propaganda. The bitter truth is that the anti-China propaganda campaign has to some extent contributed to the West being negligent to the looming crisis and they are now facing a medical, human and economic disaster."

It's hard to imagine the people of Europe and North America will quietly accept the deaths of millions of people from COVID-19 when they can see for themselves that other countries are managing the situation so much more effectively. The ruthless and moribund nature of western capitalism is being thoroughly exposed. Ultimately, what this global health crisis is demonstrating is that socialism is far superior to capitalism when it comes to meeting people's basic needs and protecting the most fundamental human right: the right to life.

*Omitted illustrations, graphs, appendices, footnotes can be found online where this article originally appeared. See Sources of articles at the end of the book for web addresses.

Eyewitness China: How socialism is defeating COVID-19

By Robert Hayes
April 7, 2020, FightBack!News

SHENZHEN, CHINA - Car horns, construction projects and the hustle of people heading to work: these are the sounds I'm greeted with every morning as life has mostly returned to normal in China. This is in stark contrast to only a month and a half ago when the streets were completely barren in Shenzhen, the sixth largest city in China and a city of 13 million people. If not for everyone wearing medical face masks and temperature checks at the entrance to every building, no one would believe we were still in the middle of a global pandemic. However, this is the reality in China, which has almost completely defeated COVID-19.

The initial lockdown in China started in Wuhan, Hubei province on January 23. I returned to Shenzhen from a short vacation on January 22, just a day before that. I did not know what the situation would be like when I returned. I had been watching the development of the outbreak on the news and was bracing myself for a potentially catastrophic situation. I even contemplated returning home to the U.S. to wait out the storm. However, the reality in China was much calmer than I expected.

Over the following weeks, every region in China followed suit implementing its own quarantine policies according to national guidelines, including my own Guangdong province on February 6.

China's socialist government was able to coordinate a centrally-planned response across the entire country that saw planes and high-speed rail halted, schools and non-essential businesses closed, a massive public safety awareness campaign, and a general sense of community among the population combating an existential public health crisis. The constant stream of information we were provided about how the outbreak was spreading and

new measures to use to protect ourselves was oddly comforting. It felt like someone was definitely in control of the situation.

Each province had its own safety measures put in place depending on the severity of the outbreak, with the strictest measures implemented in Wuhan itself. Here in Shenzhen, the government encouraged a 14-day quarantine. People were still free to leave their homes but were encouraged to do so only for essential reasons like visiting a grocery store or pharmacy. There was nowhere else to go because every other type of business was told to shut their doors. If someone ventured into public, they were required to wear a face mask. People understood the severity of the epidemic and were taught that this was a community effort to prevent further spread.

These policies continued throughout February and were slowly lifted in mid-March as the number of new cases started to decrease dramatically in most provinces. Instead of worrying what a massive quarantine would do to the bottom line of its corporations, the socialist Chinese government took a bold stance to put the lives of its people over profits. The response worked: China sees very few new local cases today with most new ones coming from Chinese citizens returning home from abroad.

This is in stark contrast to the United States. The first case of coronavirus in the U.S. was on January 19 in Snohomish County, Washington; the patient was a 35-year-old man who had recently returned from Wuhan. As the world watched China take decisive action to close down the country and protect its people, the Trump administration chose to do nothing.

For nearly two months since the first case landed in America, there were no national preventative measures put in place, apart from Trump instituting a travel ban from Europe. There was no plan to aid hospitals to gather necessary medical equipment. There was no plan to marshal the public against a public health crisis. There was no plan to protect millions of Americans from the deadly virus that was already on America's doorstep.

Instead, the Trump administration buried its head in the sand. When 15 cases were already reported, Trump himself downplayed the situation and said that they would go down to

zero, despite every report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) stating otherwise. In actuality, the number of cases in the United States has skyrocketed. As of the writing of this article, the total amount of confirmed cases of COVID-19 has reached over 300,000 people, putting the country on track to reach over 1 million cases by the end of April, if not sooner.

Unlike China's consolidated central planning, America requires each state to come up with its own stay-at-home policies. However, not every state in America has implemented preventative legislation. 41 states have all enacted some form of stay-at-home or social distancing policy, with some holdouts in the Midwest and South. Moreover, each state is inconsistent in its policies. Whereas a state like California has implemented very strict stay-at-home measures, states like Florida have treated such policies more like guidelines. This fractured capitalist system means that Americans will continue to receive conflicting information about the dangers of the virus and might exacerbate its spread by not self-isolating.

In comparison, China's socialist system has allowed for unified action across all 34 of its provinces and municipalities to combat the outbreak and protect its people. The United States' capitalist response has been much more fragmented. The fact that the outbreak is already this severe in America and yet there still aren't universal protective measures in every state is not only disturbing, but also an omen for just how severe and long-lasting the outbreak will be.

When the Chinese government shut down the city of Wuhan there was a confirmed case count of 571 - roughly similar to the current amount of cases in the state of Delaware. Even after shutting down the rest of the country, the cases in China grew to over 80,000 until Wuhan saw its first day without a new case on March 19. The propagation rate was still high even with about two months of strict quarantine, testing and public awareness.

The United States is currently failing to reach that same level of commitment. Because of the hesitancy in capitalist America, weighed down by an administration worried about the economic costs of a public shutdown, current federal projections show the outbreak could last up to 18 months in the U.S. with multiple

waves. The exponential growth of the virus means that less action now results in a more protracted epidemic in the future.

Trump stated he is hopeful to reopen the country by Easter. This is not only woefully misguided, but also incredibly dangerous.

The U.S. has not done nearly as much to contain the outbreak as China has, and even with such strict measures, it took China almost two months to finally ease the quarantine. Without similar comprehensive quarantine policy and widespread available testing, the United States' healthcare system will eventually be overloaded, as hospitals struggle to provide enough ICU beds and ventilators for severely ill patients.

We are already starting to see the cracks in the American healthcare system. Its for-profit, decentralized system is not successfully distributing enough personal protection equipment (PPE) to all of its doctors and nurses. Health care workers have had to make do with making their own equipment, leading to ineffective protection and eventual contraction of the virus themselves. This free market-based system is so woefully inept that individual states are actually competing to outbid each other to purchase medical equipment like ventilators for their own hospitals.

China quickly mobilized an army of doctors and nurses to go into the pandemic epicenter in Wuhan. The government was able to build entire hospitals in as little as ten days to help with the overflow of new patients. The socialist government guaranteed to pay for all treatment costs and also enacted policies that would guarantee pay for its immobilized workforce. After enduring a harsh two-month long storm, the outbreak has started to subside and now China will reap the benefits of its early actions. China's businesses have reopened (with new public safety guidelines), restaurants and bars are filled with customers again, and schools in some provinces have even seen the return of their students.

Because of China's coherent response to the virus within its own borders, it is now able to look outward and send aid to other struggling countries. China has sent masks, medical equipment, tests and doctors to countries like Italy, Spain, Iran, Venezuela, Serbia, Pakistan and even the United States. Just this last week China sent over 1000 ventilators to the state of New York. The

world has noticed the discrepancy between a strong China, taking decisive action to combat the outbreak, and a floundering America, unable to help itself.

As I watch the chaos unfold in the rest of the world, I'm relieved I ultimately decided to stay in China to endure the pandemic. Life has mostly returned to normal, even if some things still remain unchanged from just a couple of months ago. Although the public mask requirement has been lifted, nearly everyone still wears one. I still get my temperature checked every time I enter a building, including my own apartment complex. Schools have not yet reopened in Guangdong, as officials want to ensure the situation is absolutely contained before students return to class. Everyone here is proceeding with the utmost caution to prevent a second wave.

The amount of support and national solidarity displayed during these times has also been nothing short of amazing. The Ping An Finance Center - the fourth tallest building in the world - is lit up every night with encouraging messages to Chinese citizens to support each other and fight on. I strolled through downtown one night and found that all the skyscrapers had been proudly emblazoned with huge digital images of courageous doctors and nurses on the front-lines in Wuhan as if they were rock stars. This last week there was a national moment of commemoration. Loud sirens were blared throughout the city and every car on the street was blasting their horns as loud as they could go. The event was to mourn those who had lost their lives to COVID-19, but also to signify that China had won - they had beaten the virus.

Experiencing firsthand how the pandemic was handled here really makes me proud to live in a country that puts the needs of its people as its first priority. Life is truly returning to normal in China, but it's only because socialism carved a path to victory and helped save humanity.

Truth and Propaganda about Coronavirus

By Vijay Prashad, Weiyan Zhu, and Du Xiaojun
March 31, 2020-April 15, 2020

Part 1: Growing Xenophobia Against China in the Midst of CoronaShock

Violent attacks against Asians in the United States has spiked as a consequence of the stigma driven by the Trump administration.

On March 25, the foreign ministers of the G7 states failed to release a statement. The United States—the president of the G7 at this time—had the responsibility for drafting the statement, which was seen to be unacceptable by several other members. In the draft, the United States used the phrase "Wuhan Virus" and asserted that the global pandemic was the responsibility of the Chinese government. Earlier, U.S. President Donald Trump had used the phrase "Chinese Virus" (which he said he would stop using) and a member of his staff was reportedly heard using the slur "Kung Flu." On Fox News, anchor Jesse Watters explained in his unfiltered racist way "why [the virus] started in China. Because they have these markets where they eat raw bats and snakes." Violent attacks against Asians in the United States have spiked as a consequence of the stigma driven by the Trump administration.

Quite correctly, the World Health Organization's Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus called for "solidarity, not stigma" in a speech given on February 14, long before the virus had hit Europe or North America. Ghebreyesus knew that there would be a temptation to blame China for the virus, in fact, to use the virus as a weapon to attack China in the most repulsive way. His slogan—solidarity, not stigma—was intended

to sharply demarcate an internationalist and humanist response to the global pandemic from a narrow bigoted and unscientific response to the virus.

Origins

SARS-CoV-2, which is the official name for the virus, developed in the way many viruses develop: through the transmission between animals and humans. There is as yet no firm consensus about where this virus developed; one suggestion is that it developed in the west end of the Huanan Seafood Wholesale Market in Wuhan, in China's Hubei province, where wild animals are sold. A central issue is the expansion of agriculture into forests and hinterlands, where humans have a greater chance to interact with new pathogens, such as SARS-CoV-2. But this is not the only such virus, even though it is undoubtedly the most dangerous to humans. In the recent period, we have seen a range of panzootic avian flu such as H1N1, H5Nx, H5N2 and H5N6. Even though H5N2 was known to have originated in the United States, it was not known as the "American virus" and no one sought to stigmatize the United States for it. The scientific name was used to describe these viruses, which are not the responsibility of this or that nation; the arrival of these viruses raises the more fundamental question of human encroachment into forests and the balance between human civilization (agriculture and cities) and the wilds.

The naming of a virus is a controversial matter. In 1832, cholera advanced from British India toward Europe. It was called "Asiatic Cholera." The French felt that since they were democratic, they would not succumb to a disease of authoritarianism; France was ravaged by cholera, which was as much about the bacteria as it is about the state of hygiene inside Europe and North America. (When cholera struck the United States in 1848, the Public Bathing Movement was born.)

The "Spanish Flu" was only named after Spain because it came during World War I when journalism in most belligerent countries was censored. The media in Spain, not being in the war, widely reported the flu, and so that pandemic took the name

of the country. In fact, evidence showed that the Spanish Flu began in the United States, in a military base in Kansas where the chickens transmitted the virus to soldiers. It would then travel to British India, where 60 percent of the casualties of that pandemic took place. It was never named the "American Flu" and no Indian government has ever sought to recover costs from the United States because of the animal-to-human transmission that happened there.

China and the Coronavirus

In an important article published in the medical journal *The Lancet*, Professor Chaolin Huang wrote, "The symptom onset date of the first patient [of SARS-CoV-2] identified was December 1, 2019." Initially, there was widespread confusion about the nature of the virus, and whether it could be transmitted from human to human. It was assumed that the virus was one of the known viruses and that it was mainly transmitted from animals to humans.

Dr. Zhang Jixian, director of the Department of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine of Hubei Province Hospital of Integrated Chinese and Western Medicine, was one of the first doctors to sound the alarm about the novel coronavirus pneumonia outbreak. On December 26, Dr. Zhang saw an elderly couple who had high fever and a cough—symptoms that characterize the flu. Further examination ruled out influenza A and B, mycoplasma, chlamydia, adenovirus and SARS. A CT scan of their son showed that something had partially filled the interior of his lungs. That same day, another patient—a seller from the seafood market—presented the same symptoms. Dr. Zhang reported the four patients to China's Center for Disease Control and Prevention of the Jianghan District of Wuhan. Over the next two days, Dr. Zhang and her colleagues saw three more patients with the same symptoms who had visited the seafood market. On December 29, the Hubei Provincial Center for Disease Control and Prevention sent experts to investigate the seven patients at the hospital. On February 6, Hubei Province recognized the valuable work done by Dr. Zhang and her team

in the fight to identify and reveal the virus. There was no attempt to suppress her work.

Two other doctors—Dr. Li Wenliang (an ophthalmologist from Wuhan Central Hospital) and Ai Fen (chief of the department of emergency treatment at Wuhan Central Hospital)—played a significant role in trying to break through the confusion to bring clarity toward the new virus. In the first days, when everything seemed fuzzy, they were reprimanded by the authorities for spreading fake news. Dr. Li died of the coronavirus on February 7. Major medical and government institutions—the National Health Commission, the Health Commission of Hubei Province, the Chinese Medical Doctor Associationand the Wuhan government—expressed their public condolences to his family. On March 19, the Wuhan Public Security Bureau admitted that it inappropriately reprimanded Dr. Li, and it chastised its officers. Dr. Ai Fen was also told to stop spreading fake news, but in February she received an apology and was later felicitated by Wuhan Broadcasting and Television Station.

The provincial authorities knew about the new virus by December 29. The next day, they informed China's Center for Disease Control, and the following day, on December 31, China informed the World Health Organization (WHO), a month after the first mysterious infection was reported in Wuhan. The virus was identified by January 3; a week later, China shared the genetic sequence of the new coronavirus with WHO. It is because China released the DNA that immediate scientific work took place across the planet to find a vaccine; there are now 43 vaccine candidates, four in very early testing.

China's National Health Commission assembled a team of experts from the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention, the Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences, and the Chinese Academy of Sciences; they conducted a series of experiments on the virus samples. On January 8, they confirmed that the novel coronavirus was indeed the source of the outbreak. The first death from the virus was reported on January 11. On January 14, the Wuhan Municipal Health Commission said that there was still no evidence of human-to-human transmission, but

they could not say with certainty that limited human-to-human transmission was impossible.

A week later, on January 20, Dr. Zhong Nanshan said that the novel coronavirus could be spread from human to human (Dr. Zhong, a member of the Communist Party of China, is a famous respiratory expert and a leading person in the fight against SARS in China). Some medical workers were infected by the virus. That day Chinese President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Keqiang instructed all levels of government to pay attention to the spread of the virus; the National Health Commission and other official bodies were told to begin emergency response measures. Wuhan went into full lockdown on January 23, three days after human-to-human transmission of this virus was established. The next day, Hubei province activated its Level-1 alert. On January 25, Premier Li assembled a coordinating group. He visited Wuhan two days later.

It is unclear if China could have done anything different as it faced an unknown virus. A WHO team that visited China from February 16 to 24 praised the government and the Chinese people in its report for doing their utmost to stem the spread of the virus; thousands of doctors and medical personnel arrived in Wuhan, two new hospitals were built for those infected by the virus, and various civic bodies went into action to assist families under lockdown. What the Chinese authorities did to stem the rise of the infections— as a major new study shows—was to put those infected in hospitals and those who had been in touch with them into quarantine. This targeted policy was able to identify those who had been in the chain of infection and thereby break the chain.

The World and China

The Indian state of Kerala's Health Minister K. K. Shailaja followed the rise of the cases in Wuhan and began emergency measures in this state of 35 million people in India. She did not wait. What China was doing taught Shailaja and her team how to respond. They were able to contain the virus in this part of India.

The United States was informed about the severity of the

problem early. On New Year's Day, Chinese Center for Disease Control officials called Dr. Robert Redfield, head of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, while he was on vacation. "What he heard rattled him," wrote the New York Times. Dr. George F. Gao, the head of the Chinese CDC, spoke to Redfield days later, and Dr. Gao "burst into tears" during the conversation. This warning was not taken seriously. A month later, on January 30, U.S. President Donald Trump took a very cavalier position. "We think it's going to have a good ending for us," he said of the coronavirus.

"That I can assure you." He did not declare a national emergency till March 13, by which time the virus had begun to spread in the United States.

Others around the world were as cavalier. They were like the French politicians of 1832 who felt that France would not be affected by "Asiatic cholera." There was no such thing as Asiatic cholera in 1832, but only cholera that would harm people with poor hygienic systems. In the same way, there is no such thing as a Chinese virus; there is only the SARS-CoV-2. The Chinese people showed us the way to confront this virus, but only after some trial and error on their part. It is time to learn that lesson now. As the WHO says, "test, test, test," and then carefully calibrate lockdowns, isolations, and quarantine. Chinese doctors who developed expertise in fighting the virus are now in Iran, Italy, and elsewhere, bringing the spirit of internationalism and collaboration with them.

On March 4, Dr. Bruce Aylward, who led the WHO team to China, was interviewed by the New York Times. When asked about the Chinese response to the virus, he said, "They're mobilized, like in a war, and it's fear of the virus that was driving them. They really saw themselves on the frontlines of protecting the rest of China. And of the world."

Part 2:
How China Learned About SARS-CoV-2 in the Weeks Before the Global Pandemic

April 6, 2020

In the early weeks when the virus emerged in Wuhan, the Chinese government neither suppressed evidence nor did their warning systems fail.

The World Health Organization (WHO) declared a global pandemic on March 11, 2020. Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the director-general of the WHO, said at the press conference on that day that this was "the first pandemic caused by a coronavirus." He said, "In the past two weeks, the number of cases of COVID-19 outside China has increased 13-fold, and the number of affected countries has tripled." From March 11 onward, it became clear that this virus was deadly and that it had the capacity to tear through human society with ease. But this was not always so clear.

On March 17, Kristian Andersen of the Scripps Research Institute in California and his team showed that the new coronavirus strain, SARS-CoV-2, had a mutation in its genes known as a polybasic cleavage site that was unseen in any coronaviruses found in bats or pangolins and that there is a likelihood that the virus came to humans many years ago, and indeed not necessarily in Wuhan. Dr. Chen Jinping of the Guangdong Institute of Applied Biological Resources, along with colleagues, had earlier published a paper on February 20 noting that their data did not support the claim that the new coronavirus in humans evolved directly from a pangolin coronavirus strain. Zhong Nanshan, a noted epidemiologist, said that "although the COVID-19 first appeared in China, that does not necessarily mean it originated here."

Scientific studies will continue and will eventually give us a conclusive understanding of this virus. For now, there is no clarity that it emerged directly from the Wuhan market.

The Western media have consistently made scientifically unfounded claims about the source of the virus, even when Western scientists were urging caution. They were certainly not listening to the doctors in Wuhan or to public health experts in China.

When doctors in Wuhan first saw patients in their hospitals in December, they believed that the patients had pneumonia, although CT scans showed severe lung damage; the patients were not responding to the typical medical treatment. Doctors were alarmed by the situation, but there was no cause to imagine that this was going to escalate into a regional epidemic and then a global pandemic.

The doctors and hospitals in Wuhan eventually came to grips with the evidence before them, and as soon as it became clear that this was an unfamiliar virus and that it spread rapidly, they contacted China's national Center for Disease Control (CDC) and then the WHO.

You would not know this if you only read Western newspapers, notably the New York Times, which suggested in a widely circulated report that the Chinese government had suppressed information about the epidemic and that the Chinese warning system did not work.

Our investigation finds neither of these arguments to be true. There is no evidence that the Chinese government systematically suppressed information; there is only evidence that a few doctors were reprimanded by their hospitals or the local police station for divulging information to the public and not using the established protocols. There is also no evidence that the Chinese direct reporting system was faulty; instead, there is only evidence that the system, like any system, could not easily adjust to unknown or unclassified outbreaks.

The Chinese medical system, like other systems, has a rigorous procedure to report such things as health care emergencies. Medical personnel report to their hospital administration, which then reports to the various levels of CDC and the Health Commissions; they can also use the internet-based direct reporting system. It did not take long for the medical personnel to report the problem, and even less time for a high-level

investigation team to arrive in Wuhan. This is what our investigation found.

Did the Chinese Government Suppress Information?

Dr. Zhang Jixian, director of Respiratory and Critical Medicine at the Hubei Provincial Hospital of Integrated Traditional Chinese & Western Medicine, saw an elderly couple on December 26. Their ailment bothered her. She arranged CT scans of the lung of the couple's son who otherwise appeared healthy; the result, however, "showed ground glass opacity." Uncertain about the causes, Dr. Zhang reported the situation to Xia Wenguang, the vice president of the hospital, as well as other departments of the hospital; the hospital promptly told Jianghan District Center for Disease Control and Prevention. This took place within 24 hours.

More patients arrived at the Hubei Provincial Hospital on December 28 and 29. The doctors still did not know more than that these patients presented symptoms of pneumonia, and that they had significant lung damage. It became clear to them that the immediate location for the spread of the virus was the Huanan Seafood Wholesale Market. On December 29, as the cases increased, the hospital's vice president Xia Wenguang reported directly to the disease control department of the provincial and municipal Health Commissions. That day, the disease control department of the municipal and provincial Health Commissions instructed Wuhan CDC, Jinyintan Hospital and Jianghan District CDC to visit the Hubei Provincial Hospital for an epidemiological investigation. On December 31, an expert group of the National Health Commission arrived in Wuhan from Beijing. In other words, officials from Beijing arrived in Wuhan within five days of the first sign of a problem.

The day before the expert group arrived from Beijing, one doctor—Dr. Ai Fen—expressed her frustration at the mysterious virus with some medical school classmates. Dr. Ai Fen saw a test report of unidentified pneumonia. She circled the words "SARS coronavirus" in red, photographed it, and passed it on to a medical school classmate. The report spread among doctors in Wuhan, including Dr. Li Wenliang (a Communist Party

member) and seven other doctors who were later reprimanded by the police. On January 2, the head of Wuhan Central Hospital Supervision Department warned Dr. Ai Fen not to release information outside the channels of the hospital.

The reprimands received by these doctors are offered as evidence of suppression of information about the virus. This is not logical. The reprimands took place in early January. By December 31, a high-level team arrived from Beijing, and on that day, the WHO had been informed; China's CDC and the WHO had been informed before these two doctors were reprimanded.

On February 7, 2020, the National Supervision Commission decided to send an investigation team to Wuhan to investigate the situation. On March 19, 2020, the team published the results of their investigation and held a press conference to share their findings. As a result of the investigation, the Wuhan Public Security Bureau issued a circular to revoke the letter of reprimand issued to Dr. Li Wenliang. On April 2, Dr. Li Wenliang and 13 others who died in the fight against the virus were honored by the government as martyrs (this is the highest honor given by the Communist Party and the People's Republic of China to its citizens).

There is no evidence that local officials were afraid to report the epidemic to Beijing. There is no evidence that it took "whistleblowers," as the New York Times put it, to shine a light on the issue. Dr. Zhang was not a whistleblower; she followed the established protocol, which led to information being passed on to the WHO within days.

China's Early Warning System

In mid-November 2002, a SARS outbreak broke out in Foshan, Guangdong Province, China. Doctors could not easily understand what was going on. Eventually, in mid-February China's Ministry of Health wrote an email to the WHO Beijing office "describing 'a strange contagious disease' that has 'already left more than 100 people dead'" in one week. Also mentioned in the message was "a 'panic' attitude, currently, where people are emptying pharmaceutical stocks of any medicine they think

may protect them." It took eight months to contain this SARS outbreak.

In its aftermath, the Chinese government set up a direct reporting system to catch any health emergencies before they go out of control. The system works very well for clearly defined infectious diseases. Dr. Hu Shanlian, a professor of health economics at Fudan University, describes two such incidents. As part of the polio eradication expert group, his team found two cases of polio in Qinghai. The local government reported the cases to the central government, and it began emergency immunization as well as gave children a sugar cube vaccine to effectively control the imported poliomyelitis. As well, he reports about the two cases of plague in Beijing that came from the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region. "Diseases like these," he wrote, "can be quickly absorbed from the direct reporting system."

Well-known ailments such as polio and plague can easily be entered into an early warning system. But if the doctors are confounded by the virus, the system cannot easily work. Dr. Ai Fen, who forwarded some clinical records to her colleagues, said that the direct reporting system is very effective if the ailment is commonplace, such as hepatitis and tuberculosis. "But this time it was unknown," she said. Dr. Zhang Wenhong of Shanghai said that the direct reporting system "is more powerful than those in most countries in the world for known pathogens [such as MERS, H1N1]

or pathogens that do not spread quickly and have limited human transmission [such as H7N9]." If confronted with a new virus, the medical personnel and the direct reporting system are bewildered.

The most effective way to proceed when there is no clarity about the infection is to inform the disease control department in the hospital. This is exactly what Dr. Zhang Jixian did, and her superior, the head of the hospital, contacted the local CDC, who contacted China's national CDC and the National Health Commission of China. Within five days of Dr. Zhang's alarm, the WHO was informed about a mysterious virus in Wuhan.

Since January 21, the WHO has released a daily situation report. The first report highlights the events from December 31

to January 20. The first bullet point of that report says that on December 31, the WHO China Country Office was informed that there were "cases of pneumonia unknown etiology (unknown cause) detected in Wuhan City, Hubei Province of China." The Chinese authorities isolated a new type of coronavirus on January 7, and then on January 12 they shared the genetic sequence of the novel coronavirus for use in developing diagnostic kits. Precise information about the virus's form of transmission would not come until later.

The direct reporting system was updated on January 24, 2020, with the information about the novel coronavirus. It has now learned from experience.

Facts and Ideology

Florida Senator Marco Rubio accused the WHO of "servility to the Chinese Communist Party." He wrote that the United States will open "investigations into the WHO's unacceptably slow decision-making on whether to declare a global pandemic and into how China has compromised the integrity of the WHO." U.S. funds for the WHO are in the balance. Characteristically, Rubio offered no facts.

Was the WHO slow in declaring a global pandemic? In 2009, the first known case of H1N1 was detected in California on April 15; the WHO declared a global pandemic on June 11, two months later. In the case of SARS-CoV-2, the first known cases were detected in January 2020; the WHO declared a global pandemic on March 11—one and a half months later. In the interim, the WHO sent in investigation teams to Wuhan (January 20-21) and to Beijing, Guangdong, Sichuan, and Wuhan (February 16-24); their investigation, before the declaration, was thorough. The timeframe for the WHO declaration is similar, even faster in 2020 than it was in 2009.

Whether it is the New York Times or Marco Rubio, there is an urgency to conclude that China's government and Chinese society are to blame for the global pandemic, and that their failures not only compromised the WHO but caused the pandemic. Facts become irrelevant. What we have shown in this report is that

there was neither willful suppression of the facts nor was there a fear from local officials to report to Beijing; nor indeed was the system broken. The coronavirus epidemic was mysterious and complex, and the Chinese doctors and authorities hastily learned what was going on and then made—based on the facts available—rational decisions.

Part 3:
How China Broke the Chain of Infection

April 13, 2020

As information about coronavirus emerged, the Chinese government and Chinese society began to organize an immense campaign against its spread.

On March 31, 2020, a group of scientists from around the world—from Oxford University to Beijing Normal University— published an important paper in *Science*. This paper—"An Investigation of Transmission Control Measures During the First 50 Days of the COVID-19 Epidemic in China"—proposes that if the Chinese government had not initiated the lockdown of Wuhan and the national emergency response, then there would have been 744,000 additional confirmed COVID-19 cases outside Wuhan. "Control measures taken in China," the authors argue, "potentially hold lesso[n]s for other countries around the world."

In the World Health Organization's February report after a visit to China, the team members wrote, "In the face of a previously unknown virus, China has rolled out perhaps the most ambitious, agile and aggressive disease containment effort in history."

In this report, we detail the measures taken by the different levels of the Chinese government and by social organizations to stem the spread of the virus and the disease at a time when scientists had just begun to accumulate knowledge about them

and when they worked in the absence of a vaccine and a specific drug treatment for COVID-19.

The Emergence of a Plan

In the early days of January 2020, the National Health Commission (NHC) and the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) began to establish protocols to deal with the diagnosis, treatment, and laboratory testing of what was then considered a "viral pneumonia of unknown cause."A treatment manual was produced by the NHC and health departments in Hubei Province and sent to all medical institutions in Wuhan City on January 4; city-wide training was conducted that same day. By January 7, China CDC isolated the first novel coronavirus strain, and three days later, the Wuhan Institute of Virology (Chinese Academy of Sciences) and others developed testing kits.

By the second week of January, more was known about the nature of the virus, and so a plan began to take shape to contain it. On January 13, the NHC instructed Wuhan City authorities to begin temperature checks at ports and stations and to reduce public gathering. The next day, the NHC held a national teleconference that alerted all of China to the virulent novel coronavirus strain and to prepare for a public health emergency. On January 17, the NHC sent seven inspection teams to China's provinces to train public health officials about the virus, and on January 19 the NHC distributed nucleic acid reagents for test kits to China's many health departments. Zhong Nanshan—former president of the Chinese Medical Association—led a high-level team to Wuhan City to carry out inspections on January 18 and 19.

Over the next few days, the NHC began to understand how the virus was transmitted and how this transmission could be halted. Between January 15 and March 3, the NHC published seven editions of its guidelines. A look at them shows a precise development of its knowledge about the virus and its plans for mitigation; these included new methods for treatment, including the use of ribavirin and a combination of Chinese and allopathic medicine. The National Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine would eventually report that 90 percent of patients

received a traditional medicine, which was found to be effective in 90 percent of them.

By January 22, it had become clear that transport in and out of Wuhan had to be restricted. That day, the State Council Information Office urged people not to go to Wuhan, and the next day the city was essentially shut down. The grim reality of the virus had by now become clear to everyone.

The Government Acts

On January 25, the Communist Party of China (CPC) formed a Central Committee Leading Group for COVID-19 Prevention and Control with two leaders—Li Keqiang and Wang Huning—in charge. China's President Xi Jinping tasked the group to use the best scientific thinking as they formulated their policies to contain the virus, and to use every resource to put people's health before economic considerations. By January 27, Vice Premier of the State Council Sun Chunlan led a Central Guiding Team to Wuhan City to shape the new aggressive response to virus control. Over time, the government and the Communist Party developed an agenda to tackle the virus, which can be summarized in four points:

1. **To prevent the diffusion of the virus by maintaining not only a lockdown on the province, but by minimizing traffic within the province.** This was complicated by the Chinese New Year break, which had already begun; families would visit one another and visit markets (this is the largest short-term human migration, when almost all of China's 1.4 billion people gather in each other's homes). All this had to be prevented. Local authorities had already begun to use the most advanced epidemiological thinking to track and study the source of the infections and trace the route of transmission. This was essential to shut down the spread of the virus.
2. **To deploy resources for medical workers, including protective equipment for the workers, hospital beds for patients, and equipment as well as medicines to treat the patients.** This included the building of

temporary treatment centers—including later two full hospitals (Huoshenshan Hospital and Leishenshan Hospital). Increased screening required more test kits, which had to be developed and manufactured.

3. **To ensure that during the lockdown of the province, food and fuel were made available to the residents.**
4. **To ensure the release of information to the public that is based on scientific fact and not rumor.** To this end, the team investigated any and all irresponsible actions taken by the local authorities from the reports of the first cases to the end of January.

These four points defined the approach taken by the Chinese government and the local authorities through February and March. A joint prevention and control mechanism was established under the leadership of the NHC, with wide-ranging authority to coordinate the fight to break the chain of infection. Wuhan City and Hubei Province remained under virtual lockdown for 76 days until early April.

On February 23, President Xi Jinping spoke to 170,000 county and Communist Party cadres and military officials from every part of China; "this is a crisis and also a major test," said Xi. All of China's emphasis would be on fighting the epidemic and putting people first, and at the same time China would ensure that its long-term economic agenda would not be damaged.

Neighborhood Committees

A key—and underreported—part of the response to the virus was in the public action that defines Chinese society. In the 1950s, urban civil organizations—or *juweihui*—developed as way for residents in neighborhoods to organize their mutual safety and mutual aid. In Wuhan, as the lockdown developed, it was members of the neighborhood committees who went door-to-door to check temperatures, to deliver food (particularly to the elderly) and to deliver medical supplies. In other parts of China, the neighborhood committees set up temperature checkpoints at the entrance of the neighborhoods to monitor people who went in and out; this was basic public health in a

decentralized fashion. As of March 9, 53 people working in these committees lost their lives, 49 of them were members of the Communist Party.

The Communist Party's 90 million members and the 4.6 million grass-roots party organizations helped shape the public action across the country at the frontlines of China's 650,000 urban and rural communities. Medical workers who were party members traveled to Wuhan to be part of the frontline medical response. Other party members worked in their neighborhood committees or developed new platforms to respond to the virus.

Decentralization defined the creative responses. In Tianxinqiao Village, Tiaoma Town, Yuhua District, Changsha, Hunan Province, Yang Zhiqiang—a village announcer—used the "loud voice" of 26 loudspeakers to urge villagers not to pay New Year visits to each other and not to eat dinner together. In Nanning, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, the police used drones to play the sound of trumpets as a reminder not to violate the lockdown order.

In Chengdu, Sichuan Province, 440,000 citizens formed teams to do a range of public actions to stem the transmission of the virus: they publicized the health regulations, they checked temperatures, they delivered food and medicines, and they found ways to entertain the otherwise traumatized public. The Communist Party cadre led the way here, drawing together businesses, social groups, and volunteers into a local self-management structure. In Beijing, residents developed an app that sends registered users warnings about the virus and creates a database that can be used to help track the movement of the virus in the city.

Medical Intervention

Li Lanjuan was one of the early medical doctors to enter Wuhan; she recalled that when she got there, medical tests "were difficult to get" and the situation with supplies was "pretty bad." Within a few days, she said, more than 40,000 medical workers arrived in the city, and patients with mild symptoms were treated in temporary treatment centers, while those who had

been seriously impacted were taken to the hospitals. Protective equipment, tests, ventilators, and other supplies rushed in. "The mortality rate was greatly reduced," said Dr. Li Lanjuan. "In just two months, the epidemic situation in Wuhan was basically under control."

From across China came 1,800 epidemiological teams—with five people in each team—to do surveys of the population. Wang Bo, a leader of one of the teams from Jilin Province, said that his team conducted "demanding and dangerous" door-to-door epidemiological surveys. Yao Laishun, a member of one of the Jilin teams, said that within weeks their team had carried out epidemiological surveys of 374 people and traced and monitored 1,383 close contacts; this was essential work in locating who was infected and treated as well as who needed to be isolated if they had not yet presented symptoms or if they tested negative. Up to February 9, the health authorities inspected 4.2 million households (10.59 million people) in Wuhan; that means that they inspected 99 percent of the population, a gargantuan exercise.

The speed of the production of medical equipment, particularly protective equipment for the medical workers, was breathtaking. On January 28, China made fewer than 10,000 sets of personal protective equipment (PPE) a day, and by February 24, its production capacity exceeded 200,000 per day. On February 1, the government produced 773,000 test kits a day; by February 25, it was producing 1.7 million kits per day; by March 31, 4.26 million test kits were produced per day. Direction from the authorities moved industrial plants to churn out protective gear, ambulances, ventilators, electrocardiograph monitors, respiratory humidification therapy machines, blood gas analyzers, air disinfectant machines, and hemodialysis machines. The government focused attention on making sure that there was no shortage of any medical equipment.

Chen Wei, one of China's leading virologists who had worked on the 2003 SARS epidemic and had gone to Sierra Leone in 2015 to develop the world's first Ebola vaccine, rushed to Wuhan with her team. They set up a portable testing laboratory by January 30; by March 16, her team produced the first novel

coronavirus vaccine that went into clinical trials, with Chen being one of the first to be vaccinated as part of the trial.

Relief

To shut down a province with 60 million inhabitants for more than two months and to substantially shut down a country of 1.4 billion inhabitants is not easy. The social and economic impact was always going to be very great. But, the Chinese government—in its early directives—said that the economic hit to the country was not going to define the response; the well-being of the people had to be dominant in the formulation of any policy.

On January 22, before the Leading Group was formed, the government issued a circular that said medical treatment for COVID-19 patients was guaranteed and it would be free of cost. A medical insurance reimbursement policy was then formulated, which said that expenses from medicines and medical services needed for treating the COVID-19 would be completely covered by the insurance fund; no patient would have to pay any money.

During the lockdown, the government created a mechanism to ensure the steady supply of food and fuel at normal prices. State-owned enterprises such as China Oil and Foodstuffs Corporation, China Grain Reserves Group, and China National Salt Industry Group increased their supply of rice, flour, oil, meat and salt. All-China Federation of Supply and Marketing Cooperatives helped enterprises to get direct connection with farmers' cooperatives; other organizations like China Agriculture Industry Chamber of Commerce pledged to maintain supply and price stability. The Ministry of Public Security met on February 3 to crack down on price gouging and hoarding; up to April 8, the prosecutorial organizations in China investigated 3,158 cases of epidemic-related criminal offenses. The state offeredfinancial support for small and medium-sized enterprises; in return, businesses revamped their practices to ensure a safe working environment (Guangzhou Lingnan Cable Company, for instance, staggered lunch breaks, tested the temperature of workers, disinfected the working area periodically, ensured that ventilators worked, and provided staff with protective equipment such as masks, goggles, hand lotion, and alcohol-based sanitizers).

Lockdown

A study in *The Lancet* by four epidemiologists from Hong Kong show that the lockdown of Wuhan in late January prevented the spread of infection outside Hubei Province; the major cities of Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen, and Wenzhou, they write, saw a collapse in numbers of infections within two weeks of the partial lockdown. However, the scholars write, as a consequence of the virulence of COVID-19 and the absence of herd immunity, the virus might have a second wave. This is something that worries the Chinese government, which continues to be vigilant about this novel coronavirus.

Nonetheless, the lights of celebration flashed across Wuhan as the lockdown was lifted. Medical personnel and volunteers breathed a sigh of relief. China had been able to use its considerable resources—its socialist culture and institutions—to swiftly break the chain.

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China's socialist planning and COVID-19

By Sara Flounders
April 3, 2020, Workers World

THE GLOBAL COVID-19 viral pandemic has exposed in the sharpest light the contradiction between a globalized world economy and a still existing but archaic capitalist system based on the private expropriation of wealth and resources.

The relentless drive to reap a profit from every type of human interaction now stands exposed as the greatest danger to the people of the whole planet.

There was 130 tons of protected gear donated by China, unloaded in Austria, bound for Italy.

At the same time, China is sending enormous amounts of assistance to countries desperate for medical and personal protective equipment. These massive solidarity shipments demonstrate the superiority of China's basic socialist planning.

China is sending by air, rail and sea needed medical equipment to 89 countries around the world. This includes test kits, facemasks, protective clothing, goggles, forehead thermometers and ventilators.

Chinese medical workers and planeloads of essential supplies have already been sent to 28 countries in Asia, 26 in Africa, 16 in Europe, 10 in the South Pacific and nine in the Americas. This assistance is China's most intensive and wide-ranging emergency humanitarian operation since the founding of the People's Republic in 1949. (China Daily, March 26)

22 airlifts of medical supplies from China

By contrast the United States, still the largest and richest economy in the world, is overwhelmed by a complete lack of planning and even the capacity to mobilize the population for

their own survival. Reported COVID-19 deaths in the U.S. now exceed those in China, even though China has almost four times the population and was the first country hit with this new disease.

U.S. for-profit health corporations and government agencies at every level are now turning to China to order essential supplies. This follows two months of racist ridicule, political attacks and rejecting offers of assistance from both China and the World Health Organization.

Totally frustrated with the inability of any arm of the U.S. government to solve these essential supply problems, governors, mayors, charitable organizations, nonprofit and sister-city groups, and major health complexes have each started making their own trade deals with Chinese corporations to get emergency shipments of supplies.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency stepped in and ordered 22 airlifts of supplies from China — but set up their distribution through profit-taking private sector networks. On March 29, a commercial aircraft carrying 80 tons of medical supplies arrived in New York from China. It delivered 130,000 N95 masks, 1.8 million facemasks̃ and gowns, 10 million gloves and thousands of thermometers for distribution in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut. Similar flights to Chicago and Cleveland were planned for the next two days. (New York Times, March 29)

New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo says the state, which is now the epicenter for the coronavirus, is in urgent need of 40,000 ventilators. Unfortunately, ventilators were unavailable. European corporations had already bought up the entire inventory of the largest Chinese ventilator producer.

European Union also overwhelmed

The coronavirus has overwhelmed not only the United States, the center of international finance capital. Other highly developed imperialist countries, including Italy, Spain, Germany, France and Britain, are staggering under its impact.

They were also unable to respond effectively. In order to revive their capitalist corporations and banks after the 2008 global capitalist crash, the European Union had imposed years of

austerity and cutbacks in social programs on member countries. after the 2008 global capitalist crash. Now the EU is refusing to share assistance, even with its member countries. with its countries.

None of these imperialist countries is offering anything to the rest of the world as this extreme medical crisis spreads to over 190 countries.

Less than an hour of Pentagon spending

With great fanfare, the U.S. government pledged $62 million from the Agency for International Development to address the pandemic. This is less than what the Pentagon spends in an hour. The enormous $746 billion Pentagon budget — much of which is a subsidy to oil and military corporations — consumes roughly $2 billion a day or $80 million an hour.

While offering no real assistance to any country, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo blasted China and the countries that accept China's aid, claiming: "The Chinese Communist Party poses a substantial threat to our health and way of life, as the Wuhan virus clearly has demonstrated." (Los Angeles Times, March 29) The Trump administration has also used the hardships of this global crisis to tighten sanctions and increase threats on Iran and Venezuela.

China's 'Health Silk Road'

The coronavirus is arriving in many countries that have already suffered humanitarian crises caused by U.S. wars and sanctions, as well as natural disasters and climate change. So China is setting up what it calls a Health Silk Road. Skilled Chinese medical teams have begun arriving in a growing number of countries, including Iran, Iraq, Italy, Serbia, Venezuela, Pakistan and Cambodia.

On March 11, as the COVID-19 virus abated in China, immediate assistance was also promised to countries in Africa. Equipment alone cannot overcome the health crises in countries lacking a national health care system. However, the 20,000 test

kits, 100,000 masks, 1,000 protective suits to be delivered to each African country will have a big impact.

On March 22, a Chinese medical team arrived in Serbia with its first shipment of 16 tons. The European Union had denied any assistance to Serbia, citing U.S.-imposed sanctions.

On March 27, 130 tons of protective gear from China bound for Italy were unloaded in Vienna.

The China-Europe Express, a train line opened more than a decade ago, links 48 Chinese cities with Europe. On March 28 the first freight train to leave China after two months of lockdown departed from Wuhan. Its 19 cars were loaded with locally manufactured medical supplies.

Wuhan had been China's hardest-hit city by the COVID-19 virus. Now it has a great deal of expertise and newly manufactured medical equipment to offer the world. Reuters reports that a shipment of a million masks and gloves from China arrived in France on March 22.

China develops diagnostic and treatment plans

China's National Health Commission has compiled an invaluable set of diagnostic and treatment plans. It is sharing them, as well as other technical documents, with 180 countries and more than 10 international and regional organizations.

The commission has also conducted in-depth exchanges with the international community, holding about 30 video conferences on technical issues regarding the coronavirus with more than 100 countries and regions.

One such video conference with the World Health Organization, held on March 12, shared China's experiences with representatives from 77 countries and seven international organizations. It was viewed online by more than 100,000 people.

Profit system creates disaster

In this global economy, why have offers of essential testing equipment and medical supplies from China, and even from the World Health Organization, been rejected by the Trump administration?

It's not only because of growing U.S. hostility to China's stunning level of development. Nor is it driven only by right-wing ideologues.

Medical care exists for profit. Free or inexpensive test kits and medical supplies threaten the capitalist drive to profit out of every human transaction. Pharmaceutical, medical and insurance companies are the most profitable corporations in the U.S. today. Along with oil and so-called defense corporations, they dominate finance capital.

During the crucial two months when these vital supplies could have been quickly ordered or manufactured and stockpiled, there was not yet a strong enough profit incentive to produce them. Medical facilities in the U.S. operate on a lean ship-to-order basis.

The unplanned and competitive nature of capitalist production distorts all social interaction. Wild speculation and bubbles of quick profit are the norm.

As the crisis became obvious to millions, anything assumed to be in possible short supply was immediately hoarded for speculation. This has led to life-threatening shortages of hand sanitizers, facemasks, essential foods and even toilet paper.

Who will pay and who will profit is the fundamental question in all capitalist relations. What is most needed — to fulfill people's needs — is not part of the calculation.

As early as January, the Trump administration's own medical experts identified a probable shortage of ventilators as a critical problem. Yet "both the White House and the Federal Emergency Management Agency struggled to define what was needed, who would pay for it and how to solve the problem of supply chains." ("Alliance with industry does Trump no good in quest for ventilators," New York Times, March 20)

Knowing that nothing was actually happening to solve any of these problems, Trump continued to make assurances: "We are going to have plenty."

Many media reports have confirmed that the lack of testing kits arose from the manufacturers' insistence on exclusive contracts with guaranteed profits. Follow-through and distribution plans were also totally lacking. Even how to keep a count of test results was not worked out in advance.

No planning for the population's needs, along with chaotic planning for what is profitable, has created a crisis in every hospital in the U.S. Private and public hospitals, competing city, state and federal agencies, local and national charities are now in bidding wars for existing supplies.

Socialist planning is the answer

How was China able to control the virus? How is it now able to begin providing massive assistance to other countries on a global scale?

Clearly, socialist planning and large-scale collective ownership of major industries, including the medical industry, have been decisive.

Even in small developing countries, socialist planning frees up the economy to meet domestic need and even make major contributions to other countries trapped by U.S. economic domination and archaic social relations.

Look at Cuba. A country of only 11 million people, it sends more doctors to developing countries than does the World Health Organization. Cuba has also developed and freely shared with the world a medication that aids in treating those who test positive for COVID-19: Interferon Alfa-2B.

Up to now the U.S. government has not only barred the use of medications from Cuba, it has actually threatened countries that accept them. But as the death toll mounts in the U.S., demands for treatments and medical equipment may force changes in seemingly set-in-stone policies.

China has struggled to overcome past underdevelopment by balancing different forms of central planning, local collective

ownership, capitalist incentives and shared ownership with Western corporations and banks. At the same time, the Communist Party has maintained broad political and economic control. It has guided national development plans and controlled what imperialist corporations can and cannot do in China.

China is still a developing country emerging from 200 years of colonial looting and underdevelopment. But it has maintained steady development since its 1949 Communist revolution overturned archaic property relations and imperialist domination. That revolution 70 years ago has made all the difference in this global pandemic.

SECTION 2:
Blaming China

The new Cold War with China has cost lives against coronavirus

By Max Blumenthal
March 24, 2020, Grayzone

MARCH 19, 2020, was a milestone for the People's Republic of China. After enduring over two months of an epidemic of novel coronavirus, China reported that it experienced its first day without a new case of locally transmitted infection. After placing 46 million residents in Wuhan and 15 other cities under quarantine, mobilizing thousands of medical professionals to the front lines, building new hospitals practically overnight, and implementing cautionary measures such as forcing banks to disinfect cash, the country turned a corner in what its president, Xi Jinping, called "the People's War."

Throughout the crisis, leaders of the World Health Organization (WHO) heaped praise on the Chinese government. "Its actions actually helped prevent the spread of coronavirus to other countries," said WHO Director-General Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus. Tedros, as he is known, added that he was "very impressed and encouraged by the president [Xi's] detailed knowledge of the outbreak."

Tedros's assistant, Dr. Bruce Aylward, who also visited China, was astounded by what he observed: "What I saw was a tremendous sense of responsibility, and of duty, to protect their families, their communities, and even the world, from this disease," Aylward marveled in a televised interview. "I left with such a deep sense of admiration for the people of Wuhan and for Chinese society in general."

During the early days of the crisis around Wuhan, Chinese authorities took some ham-fisted measures to suppress public discussion of the outbreak. Perhaps Beijing was in denial about the gravity of the epidemic, or terrified of its societal ramifications. It was not long, however, before the Chinese government made the genome of the virus public, shared detailed information about

the virus with the international community, and provided intelligence to the WHO, which relayed it to the U.S. Center for Disease Control (CDC). In fact, Health and Human Services Director Alex Azar recently revealed that the CDC first learned about coronavirus from Chinese colleagues on January 3. Tragically, while Beijing was buying valuable time for the West to prepare for the lethal pandemic, and losing the lives of medical personnel in the process, Washington chose conflict over cooperation.

Almost as soon as news of the viral outbreak reached the West, mainstream pundits turned up their noses and sneered at China's aggressive response. A now-discredited January 24 op-ed published in Slate and authored in conjunction with the Democratic Party-affiliated New America Foundation proclaimed, "Many of China's actions to date are overly aggressive and ineffective in quelling the outbreak." The *Los Angeles Times* reinforced the condescending line, mocking President Xi's efforts to rally Chinese citizens as "shoddy propaganda." At around the same time, the cover of the neoliberal *Economist* magazine depicted China as a global disease infecting the planet—an authoritarian plague that threatened the free world more than any pandemic.

For his part, Trump has referred to the sickness as the "China virus,"deploying xenophobic bile to deflect blame for weeks of inaction. ("We have it totally under control," the president insisted on January 22, trying in vain to calm markets. A month later, Trump claimed without evidence, "The people that have [coronavirus] are getting better.") By March 14, as coronavirus exploded throughout New York City and Seattle, Joseph Biden took to the stage of a Democratic presidential debate and painted the sickness as a foreign weapon of mass destruction. "This is like we are being attacked from abroad!" he bellowed. CNN debate moderator Dana Bash proceeded to push the candidates to propose "consequences" China should face for the coronavirus–not lessons the U.S. could learn from China's successful fight against it.

In reflexive and mostly bipartisan fashion, the U.S. political class has exploited a pandemic to ratchet up hostility against China. While the rising power is a necessary partner against a

gathering storm of disease and societal unraveling, too many in Washington are unable to see Beijing as anything other than the greatest single threat to American global hegemony.

Over the past seven decades, the U.S. has encircled China with hundreds of military bases,threading bombers, naval warships, and nuclear-tipped missiles into a geopolitical noose. President Barack Obama's "pivot to Asia" designated a full two-thirds of U.S. naval forces to contain China, setting the stage for a new Cold War. Trump's national defense doctrine formally enshrined the strategy by declaring "great power competition" with Beijing and Moscow as the Pentagon's top priority. A trade war followed, with the U.S. jailing a CFO of the Chinese telecom company Huawei, banning its 5G technology, and slapping hefty tariffs on $112 billion on Chinese imports. Dubiously sourced stories of Holocaust-level human rights violations by China supplied the new Cold War with heart-string-tugging background music, drawing suggestible Western liberals into the hostile narrative.

The same U.S. leadership class that launched the first Cold War and reignited it during the Obama and Trump eras has also presided over a systematic degradation of America's public health system. While the task of providing health care was handed over to corporations, the number of beds per 1,000 Americans declined steadily from 4.5 in 1975 to 2.5 in 2014, according to the CDC. Having left its citizens on the verge of mass suffocation by a ghastly respiratory infection, the U.S. government has little to offer them today beyond Cold War bluster and corporate bailouts.

More than any event since the 2008-09 financial crash, the coronavirus pandemic has exposed the rotten foundation of American empire—and it has only begun to exact its toll. By March 19, the day that China declared victory over coronavirus, the U.S. achieved a milestone of its own: it boasted the sharpest increase in deaths and new infections per day of any country in the world. New York City had become ground zero for the sickness, with 10,000 new cases. At one Brooklyn emergency hospital, a doctor melted down over the lack of resources. "It's a disaster," he fretted. "We just had a half dozen staff test positive.

We have 17 ventilators left in the institution. Some staff can't come because they're getting wiped out."

In hospitals across the country, emergency room doctors have been forced to fashion their own masks, or to simply wear a bandana over their faces. Doctors badly needed N95 air-filtering respirator masks to protect themselves from infection while they treated patients hacking up toxic sputum. The Trump administration has invoked the Defense Production Act, a Korean War-era provision that would enable him to compel American businesses to produce urgently needed products. Revealingly, Trump has refused to implement the act on the grounds that doing so would mimic Venezuelan-style socialism.

While doctors wait in vain for N95 masks, a bipartisan group of 130 lawmakers made their real priorities clear when they issued a call for a massive buildup of F-35 jets. "Full funding is needed for the delivery of new weapons and critical capabilities necessary to keep the F-35 ahead of our adversaries," the lawmakers wrote in a March 19 letter to the Pentagon, demanding 98 new stealth fighters at a cost of $94 million each.

If anything has been more elusive than protective masks—and less functional than the accident-prone F-35—it is America's coronavirus testing system. Testing kits were magically provided to entire NBA teams and A-list celebrities with symptoms, but ask any average American in need where they plan to get screened, and you're almost certain to draw a blank. As Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, confessed in testimony to Congress,"The idea of anybody getting [tested] easily the way people in other countries are doing it, we are not set up for that. Do I think we should be? Yes. But we are not."

Inside China, an already effective coronavirus screening regimen is likely to improve thanks to an innovative test that can be administered in airports, and that produces results in just 40 minutes. The creator of the groundbreaking test, Weihong Tan, was a professor at the University of Florida's cancer research lab until last year, when the Department of Justice targeted him with a McCarthy-style investigation. Accused by a Cold War-crazed U.S. government of failing to disclose Chinese funding for his

department, he returned to Hunan University, where he found ample government support for his lifesaving research.

With its hollowed out public health-care system overwhelmed by a pandemic in just its early phase, the U.S. has sat and watched as China embarks on the largest international humanitarian mission in modern times. European Commission president Ursula von der Leyen has effusively thanked China for donating two million surgical masks, 200,000 N95 masks, and 50,000 testing kits to hard-hit areas of Europe. After welcoming a massive delivery of Chinese aid to his country, Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic angrily accused the EU of abandonment: "European solidarity does not exist. That was a fairytale. The only country that can help us in this hard situation is the People's Republic of China. For the rest of them, thanks for nothing."

In response to China's humanitarian crusade, the Trump administration's National Security Council has rolled out a coordinated propaganda offensive blaming China for "covering up" coronavirus. Ironically, the same corporate networks that have spent the past year clamoring for Trump's impeachment have provided the White House with an eager megaphone for its anti-China crusade. A report by CNN, for instance, suggested dark motives behind China's delivery of ventilators and masks to Europe, claiming Beijing was "possibly trying to curry favor." On Twitter, trending hashtags like #ChinaLiedAndPeopleDied have suddenly materialized, amplifying the Trump administration's influence operation.

While China and the tiny, U.S.-embargoed nation of Cuba send medical brigades to hard-hit regions of Europe, Washington is sending the world sanctions and shows of military force. The Trump administration has zealously weaponized coronavirus to drive its "maximum pressure" policy of regime change against Iran, where the death toll is approaching 2,000. During a March 18 press conference, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo vowed to ramp up crushing sanctions on Iran, even though (or perhaps because) the economic blockade was preventing the country from purchasing vital medicine and ventilators. In Venezuela, meanwhile, U.S. sanctions have increased the cost of a coronavirus test to three times more than in non-sanctioned countries.

Those who find Trump's actions at home and abroad deadly and dangerous must take heart that his opponents in the Democratic Party have united behind Biden, who seems to forget where he is at times. One of the 76-year-old former vice president's most recent public appearancessaw him in a makeshift studio in his Delaware home, staring off into the distance in a stupor, seemingly frozen in confusion, until his wife shuffled him off camera. Dogged by rumors of dementia following a comically stumbling performance on the presidential trail, where his shell of a campaign has been sustained by some 60 faceless billionaires, Biden disappeared for an entire week in mid-March, as the crisis reached its apex in the U.S. He finally resurfaced on March 23 for a deeply uninspiring online livestream that pitted the stammering candidate against a barely functional teleprompter.

As the pandemic spreads across the country, college students have descended on the beaches of South Florida for the spring break beer bash that has become a rite of passage for the young and mindless. The state's Republican governor, Ron DeSantis, a Harvard graduate who was narrowly elected after warning his African American opponent would "monkey this up," defended his decision to keep beaches open for the annual bacchanal. "If you have a Floridian that goes and walks their dog, like a married couple on the beach," De Santis eloquently explained, "as long as you're not within six feet of each other, they view that as a healthy thing."

With the shores wide open for randy fun, a widely-watched video circulated on Twitter showing a sun-burned bro gawking at a bikini-clad woman slurping a Bud Light through the rear end of a bent-over co-ed and exclaiming, "Nobody gives a fuck about coronavirus here!"

Shelter in place and grab a protective mask if you can find one.

The deluge has just begun.

The United States Is Where COVID-19 Deaths Are Being Under-reported

By Margaret Flowers
April 7, 2020, Popular Resistance

While the United States government and corporate media point fingers at China, accusing the Chinese government of under-reporting the number of deaths from COVID-19, it is actually the US and not China that has that problem.

When the COVID-19 pandemic started, China responded quickly by reporting the novel disease to the World Health Organization and taking steps to identify and study the virus. Within a matter of weeks, it was clear that the virus was a serious public health matter. China then mobilized its resources and took an aggressive public health approach to contain the spread and care for those who became ill. For this, the US chastised China, calling it "authoritarian" and "draconian," instead of learning from the success of China.

So far, China has controlled the virus, keeping the total number of cases below 82,000 and the number of deaths in the low 3,000's. Today, they are easing the quarantine, opening businesses back up and slowly returning to normal activity. The World Health Organization sent a mission to China that commended the government for its actions. Jim Naureckas of Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting writes there is no evidence that China is hiding data. Quite the opposite, researchers in the West have been combing through China's data to see what they can learn.

Contrast that with the United States where there has been a total lack of leadership at the national level leaving states to compete with each other for resources and fend for themselves. The total number of COVID-19 cases that have been reported is close to 400,000 and is rising by tens of thousands daily. The

total number of reported deaths is over 12,000. New York alone has almost 140,000 reported cases and almost 7000 deaths, placing it in close range to Italy and Spain, which rank second and third in the world for the most cases.

Now, evidence indicates that the number of COVID-19 cases in the United States is likely to be much higher than what is being reported. The University of Texas at Austin reports it is likely that only one in ten cases of COVID-19 in the United States is being reported. This means the United States is closer to 4 million cases of COVID-19. They write that: "If a county has detected only one case of COVID-19, there is a 51% chance that there is already a growing outbreak underway. COVID-19 is likely spreading in 72% of all counties in the US, containing 94% of the national population. Proactive social distancing, even before two cases are confirmed, is prudent."

The number of deaths from COVID-19 is also being under-reported. McClatchy found that there was a spike of deaths from pneumonia in the US in late February and early March that were not caused by the flu. They write:

"There has been an increase in pneumonia deaths unrelated to the flu — showing that the deaths could be caused by the coronavirus, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Pneumonia deaths have been on the rise since late February, outpacing the percentage of flu-related deaths, the CDC said. One explanation, according to the CDC, is that some people are dying of pneumonia after contracting the coronavirus....

Doctors said that some coronavirus deaths in February and early March were misidentified as being caused by the flu or pneumonia, The New York Times reported."

Recently, Mark Levine, the Chair of the New York City Health Council, tweeted this message out:

Mark D. Levine @MarkLevineNYC

Apr 6, 2020 Replying to @MarkLevineNYC Grieving families report calling as many as half a dozen funeral homes and finding none that can handle their deceased loved ones.

Cemeteries are not able to handle the number of burial requests and are turning most down. 4/

@MarkLevineNYC It's not just deaths in hospitals which are up.

On an average day before this crisis there were 20-25 deaths at home in NYC. Now in the midst of this pandemic the number is 200-215. *Every day*. 5/ Mark D. Levine @MarkLevineNYC

Apr 6 Now only those few who had a test confirmation *before* dying are marked as victims of coronavirus on their death certificate. This almost certainly means we are undercounting the total number of victims of this pandemic. 7/ Mark D. Levine @ MarkLevineNYC

Apr 6 And still the number of bodies continues to increase. The freezers at OCME facilities in Manhattan and Brooklyn will soon be full. And then what? 8/

And ABC News issued this grim report today:

"Now, with the public and private hospital networks in New York City overwhelmed to the point of drowning, there are no resources or time to test samples from the dead or resolve statistical problems, officials acknowledged. At the moment, hospitals in New York City are only testing for novel coronavirus among hospitalized patients."

Testing is the foundation of a public health approach to controlling the spread of infectious diseases. The commonsense approach is to screen everyone for symptoms, test those who are likely to be positive and isolate them until the results are in. If they test positive, they need to be quarantined and monitored for worsening disease and all of their recent contacts need to be located and tested too. This will give a better idea of where the disease hotspots are but it won't identify everyone who is infectious because about half to three-quarters of those who have COVID-19 are asymptomatic and people are highly infectious in the few days before symptoms appear.

It is unlikely that such an approach will be implemented in the United States. There is a severe lack of everything – tests, personal protective equipment, hospital beds, ventilators, public health staff, and healthcare providers. New York City is in a

severe crisis state and there are many other cities that are likely to be just a few weeks behind New York in terms of the severity of the situation.

The best we can do right now is to heed the advice to distance ourselves physically, observe excellent hygiene practices and make sure those around us have what they need to get through the crisis.

If we do this, we may be able to hold the number of cases down so the healthcare system can catch up.

We also need to remember that this situation will likely last for months to years. The economic collapse partly triggered by the pandemic is causing rates of unemployment never seen before in the United States. Millions of people who lose their jobs are also losing their health insurance. States are being subjected to a scarcity of supplies and price-gouging. So, in addition to the above actions, we need to demand the nationalization of our entire healthcare system from the hospitals to the pharmaceutical corporations to the medical device and supply companies. We need to invest in a strong public health infrastructure from the local to the state to the national level that can swiftly implement a plan to contain an epidemic when it begins. And we need policies that protect everyone from financial insecurity, homelessness, and lack of food.

Every day, I hear people saying that the COVID-19 pandemic is a hoax. We just need to look around to see the fallacy of that assertion. It is clear that countries with a strong social infrastructure have been able to minimize disease, suffering, and death while those with privatized, for-profit infrastructure have fared poorly. Those who deny the pandemic remind me of climate deniers. The impacts are obvious but they continue their destructive habits placing the whole world at risk. Even if you aren't convinced the pandemic is real, it is prudent to behave as if it is because the risks of not doing so are too great.

*Omitted illustrations, graphs, appendices, footnotes can be found online where this article originally appeared. See Sources of articles at the end of the book for web addresses.

China's COVID reporting truthful, contrary to US rhetoric

By John Walsh
April 27, 2020, Asia Times

Far from 'unrealistic,' close analysis shows China mortality rate in line with East Asian neighbors

At US President Donald Trump's April 18 press briefing on the coronavirus pandemic, Dr Deborah Birx, coordinator of the US response to the outbreak, criticized China's reports on the COVID-19 data. She did so by showing a chart with data from the following countries. (I have updated the chart with data* from The New York Times of April 19, but the two data sets differ by only a negligible amount.)

Mortality, deaths per 100,000 population:

Belgium: 49.8 Spain: 43.8 Italy: 39.2 France: 29.4 UK: 24.2

Netherlands: 21.4 USA: 10.9 Iran: 6.3 Germany: 5.2 China: 0.3

Dr. Birx called China's low number "unrealistic," saying, "I put China on there so you could see how basically unrealistic this could be." That was after Trump pointed at China's number and interrupted Birx to ask rhetorically, "Excuse me. Does anybody really believe this number? Does anybody really believe this number?" (In the transcript; see minute 37:08 and following.)

The argument that Birx and Trump were making was clear. China's number was way out of line with the others, lower by more than a factor of 10. Therefore, China's report was a lie.

But in her chart Birx omitted data coming from countries of East Asia and nearby that have been praised by the US media for their performance and whose data are unquestioned in the West. Here are some relevant omitted data, taken again from The New York Times of April 19, with China included again for comparison.

Deaths per 100,000 population:

South Korea: 0.5 Japan: 0.5 Australia: 0.3 China: 0.3 Singapore:

0.2 Taiwan: less than 0.1 Hong Kong: less than 0.1

China's number falls right into line with that of neighboring countries. Birx's exercise, in fact, is a classic example of lying by omission, a half-truth being a full lie.

Either Dr Birx was aware of these data and dishonestly withheld them, or she was not aware of them and she is incompetent. Neither conclusion is very comforting. Trump is to be criticized both for his jumping in to bash China and for tolerating someone like Birx with the direction of the government's response to the pandemic.

These data make it quite clear that countries of East Asia and Australia have performed better than the US and Europe. Why is this? Two categories of explanation suggest themselves. First, different strains of the virus may differ in lethality. There is no proof for this, but there is some suggestion of it in laboratory tests.

A second reason for the better performance of East Asian countries and Australia is that they paid attention to what China was doing, perhaps because they are neighbors and better informed of what was going on in China. Much news about China is simply not reported by the mainstream media in the US and among US "allies."

In this case, however, concern about a developing pandemic right next door may have lofted news from China over the information blockade. These countries may have seen that China had accumulated considerable experience with the virus and at great cost in life and suffering was having success in stopping its spread. As a result, they followed what China did in many respects.

But no matter the reason, China's data fall right in line with many of its neighbors. That is the main point. The bottom line is that these data provide us with no reason to doubt China's reporting. And the correspondence between the data China

released and other regional data is consistent with the fact that China reported COVID-19 deaths accurately.

Since so much attention is devoted to fact-checking Trump's press conferences, I thought surely the press would have picked up on this obvious manipulation of data. I checked on the fact check of the press conference by CNN, no friend of the Trump administration, and there was no mention of this lie by omission.

Next, I checked the Public Broadcasting Service, a pillar of probity and respectability and also no friend of Trump. PBS does a brief online look at each press conference with anchor Hari Sreenivasan and Zachary Green. They showed Birx's chart and noted Trump's comments but made no criticism of the omitted data.

A check of the NYT, another arch-foe of Trump, on the following day disclosed no mention of the Birx-Trump deceit.

How can this be explained? One cannot help but feel that the idea of Chinese malfeasance in all things has become so deeply embedded in the body politic that to challenge charges made against China is now beyond the pale. No charge, no matter how unfounded or contrary to actual fact, is too brazen to report without a moment's consideration. In fact, to tell the truth in such a situation may damage the career of a rising journalistic "star."

Why are we to be concerned about this matter? Because China's experience has had much to teach us. And since China is now emerging from the recession caused by the pandemic, it may have more to teach us as we move to economic recovery.

For example, to get back to normalcy, China has now rolled out large-scale testing on a territory roughly the size of the US. How is that working and how might it be improved? To ignore China's experience without careful evaluation at a time like this could well end up as a self-destructive act.

But there is an even bigger danger here. There has been a growing antagonism between China and the US since former president Barack Obama's ill-advised "pivot" against China, followed by Trump's equally ill-advised trade war. Now we find Trump and Democratic presidential hopeful Joe Biden competing to be the No 1 China basher.

The press conference of April 18 falls into this pattern, allowing Trump to parade as tough on China and escape from a thrashing by China-hostile media for his earlier praise of President Xi Jinping and China for their response to COVID-19.

To take the route of hostility to China can lead to a clash between two economic giants and nuclear powers, which could lead to a disaster for all humanity. As Henry Kissinger reminded us some time back, armed conflict between the two giants could bring the same level of devastation to all the world that World War I brought to Europe. And that is likely to be an underestimate. Let us step back from this path before it is too late.

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Debunking Trump and Corporate Media's WHO/China Coverup Conspiracy Theories

By Joshua Cho
June 21, 2020, FAIR

FAIR HAS CRITICIZED the plausibility of various origin theories regarding COVID-19 (4/17/20, 5/7/20), and of unfounded allegations of a Chinese cover-up laundered by corporate media (4/2/20, 4/9/20). Other persistent myths are allegations of Chinese manipulation of the World Health Organization (WHO), and blaming Chinese secrecy for the lack of early action on containing the coronavirus.

The Trump administration suspended funding to WHO in April— the UN's primary infectious disease-fighting body — accusing it of "severely mismanaging and covering up the spread of the coronavirus," and of taking China's allegedly deceptive claims about its handling of COVID-19 at "face value." But corporate media had already been boosting these same talking points.

The Wall Street Journal (2/12/20) reports that "the WHO has rarely had to deal with an entity as politically and economically powerful as China today"—other than the US from 1948–2014, of course.

The Wall Street Journal's "The World Health Organization Draws Flak for Coronavirus Response" (2/12/20) effectively accused WHO of being "too deferential to China in its handling of the new virus," and criticized WHO Director-General Tedros Ghebreyesus for "bending to Beijing" after lauding China's unquestionably effective swift quarantine of 60 million people, and for declaring that "China is actually setting a new standard for outbreak response" and identifying the virus in "record time." The Journal further expounded the conspiracy theory of a seemingly omnipotent China having WHO under its thumb:

Over its decades of battling epidemics, the WHO has rarely had to deal with an entity as politically and economically powerful as China today. It can't afford to alienate the country's leadership, whose clout and financial largess it aims to attract to global health causes. It needs Beijing's cooperation in preventing a full-blown pandemic—and this may not be the last time. China is the source of many emerging pathogens, which jump from animals to humans in its teeming live markets and can cause deadly epidemics.

Bloomberg (4/1/20): "The officials asked not to be identified because the report [on how China concealed the extent of its virus outbreak] is secret, and they declined to detail its contents." But trust us—China is not being transparent!

According to the Journal's logic, when WHO praises China for an effective response containing COVID-19 and giving the rest of the world ample time to take health precautions, it is "compromising its own epidemic response standards, eroding its global authority, and sending the wrong message to other countries that might face future epidemics." When Dr. Bruce Aylward—a Canadian medical expert with 30 years of experience combating polio, Ebola and other global health emergencies—concluded that he "didn't see anything that suggested manipulation of numbers," after leading a team of experts visiting China for WHO, that can't be an accurate observation. For corporate journalists, it can only be because he was duped by the devious Chinese government "underreporting both total cases and deaths it's suffered from the disease" (Bloomberg, 4/1/20).

The Journal flimsily explained that China wields such formidable control over the WHO because China is a "future source of funds and a partner with which to tackle the biggest global health problems," and not as a "current donor." That would be because a cursory examination of WHO's funding would reveal that the US donated more than 10 times more money to WHO ($893 million) than China ($86 million), despite the US having almost $200 million in arrears before suspending payments (Axios, 4/15/20).

Neither does the Journal explain how or why WHO could possibly withhold information from Western nations even if it

wanted to, when its leadership is stacked with Americans and Europeans, and 15 US officials were embedded with the WHO in Geneva, given that the US is the most "politically and economically powerful" nation on Earth. This makes the Trump administration's declaration of the US terminating its membership in WHO after threats to permanently cut funding especially egregious.

Nor can the Journal explain the source of China's fearsome influence over independent and prestigious medical journals like Nature (5/4/20), Science (3/28/20) and the Lancet (3/7/20), which also credited the effectiveness and transparency of China's response for saving thousands of lives (CGTN, 5/1/20, 5/10/20). Does China's mysterious and awe-inspiring influence extend over Western medical journals as well?

When Foreign Policy (5/12/20) reported on the exclusive scoop of a leaked dataset of coronavirus cases and deaths from the Chinese military's National University of Defense Technology, it confirmed that the leaked information "matches" the publicly available numbers the Chinese government posts online—which poses an inconvenience to those spouting conspiracy theories of a Chinese government coverup. Corporate media accounts of Chinese deception and fake statistics also fail to explain how the Chinese government possesses the fantastical ability to deceive governments and independent medical experts around the world, even if it wanted to. As FAIR's Jim Naureckas (4/2/20) pointed out earlier:

The reality is that it's very hard to hide an epidemic. Stopping a virus requires identifying and isolating cases of infection, and if you pretend to have done so when you really haven't, the uncaught cases will grow exponentially. Maintaining a hidden set of real statistics and another set for show would require the secret collusion of China's 2 million doctors and 3 million nurses—the kind of improbable cooperation that gives conspiracy theories a bad name.... If China is merely pretending to have the coronavirus under control, the pathogen will rapidly surge as people resume interacting with their communities. Once international travel is restored, it will be quite obvious which countries do and don't have effective management of COVID-19.

China revising its tally of coronavirus deaths was presented

by the Guardian (4/17/20) as a suspicious development. Two days earlier, when New York City similarly added missed cases to its death toll, the Guardian (4/15/20) reported this as a move that would "help New York City determine the scope of the crisis."

Countries revising their figures upon receiving new information is to be expected, and is not necessarily evidence of deceit, as plenty of nations besides China revise their data upwards. Yet only China is singled out as being exceptionally deceptive. For example, in the same week New York revised its death toll upwards by nearly 3,800, China's adding almost 1,300 dead to its Wuhan data was presented as a possible coverup (Politico, 4/14/20; Guardian, 4/17/20). The Moon of Alabama blog (4/1/20) explained some of the complexities in reporting numbers during a pandemic in real-time:

> Does one include co-morbids or not in the count? What about casualties of a car accident that also test positive for COVID-19 when they die? What about those who died with COVID-19 symptoms but could not be tested for lack of test kits? Are the tests really working reliably?... What about asymptomatic cases that test positive. Are these false positives, or do these people really have the virus? One can only know that by testing them a month later for antibodies.

Other arguments for Chinese control of the WHO cite the delay in declaring a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC), or pandemic. A Foreign Policy op-ed (4/2/20) argued that "Beijing succeeded from the start in steering" WHO, because it was "reluctant" to declare a PHEIC. Similarly, reports in the Washington Post (2/8/20) and New York Times (4/8/20) criticized WHO for "moving too slowly in declaring a global health emergency."

However, historian Vijay Prashad (People's Dispatch, 4/29/20) pointed out that the US and European countries were the ones that pushed to revise the rules for declaring a PHEIC or pandemic in 2005, which now requires a delay in announcement until air travel and trade wouldn't be unduly disrupted. This means that the very same countries who are criticizing Chinese "influence" over the WHO are the ones whose actual clout was responsible for constraining WHO in the first place.

Another angle on China's supposed manipulation of WHO are claims that China and WHO buried early Taiwanese warnings. Reuters published several reports (3/24/20, 4/11/20) claiming that the WHO "ignored Taiwan's questions at the start of the coronavirus outbreak." The Foreign Policy op-ed (4/2/20) on China's control of WHO accused the agency of "ignoring The new Cold War with China has cost lives against coronavirus Taiwanese doctors."

This claim is based on an email the Taiwan CDC sent to WHO on December 31, presented as the smoking gun of Taipei warning WHO of human-to-human transmission, because it referred to "case hav[ing] been isolated for treatment." However, as Beijing-based journalist Ian Goodrum pointed out on Twitter (4/11/20), "WHO received identical information from Wuhan" that same day, December 31, that "all patients are isolated." When one actually reads the email, it's clear that Taiwan didn't send any warning to WHO about human-to-human transmission (which is never explicitly mentioned), and was instead, after citing Chinese sources, asking for more information. AP: China didn't warn public of likely pandemic for 6 key days.

AP (4/15/20) doesn't note that at the beginning of the "six key days," the death toll from COVID-19 stood at one. On the sixth day, it rose from three to six.

Perhaps the most persistent false narrative of Chinese deception and concealment has nothing to do with fake statistics or Chinese manipulation of the WHO, but with China allegedly withholding details from the world and silencing whistleblowers. The Associated Press's widely circulated report, "China Didn't Warn Public of Likely Pandemic for Six Key Days" (4/15/20), contained many blatant falsehoods and omissions.

The AP report blamed the "delay" in informing the public between January 14 and January 20, after "top Chinese officials secretly determined they likely were facing a pandemic from a new coronavirus," for infecting millions and killing thousands.

The AP's claims about the Chinese government not informing the public for six crucial days are demonstrably false, as Chinese state media published multiple reports before this "crucial"

period, informing the public of a "new virus" in Wuhan (China Daily, 1/9/20).

Although the AP notes that raising the alarm prematurely would damage the Chinese government's credibility and "cripple their ability to mobilize the public," that is not given credence as an explanation for the government "waiting" until leading Chinese epidemiologist Dr. Zhong Nanshan confirmed human-to-human transmission of COVID-19 on January 20. Instead, AP claimed that "China's rigid controls on information, bureaucratic hurdles and a reluctance to send bad news up the chain of command muffled early warnings," despite WHO and AP itself (1/15/20) reporting on Chinese officials warning that the possibility of human-to-human transmission could not be ruled out during this supposed period of "silence."

AP: China exonerates doctor reprimanded for warning of virus AP (3/19/20) cited Dr. Li Wenliang as an example of a "whistleblower" silenced by Chinese authorities, though he asked his friends not to make public his concerns that SARS had reappeared in China.

An earlier AP report (3/19/20) shared a similar perspective, citing the familiar (and repeatedly debunked) myth of the Chinese government silencing Dr. Li Wenliang, a supposed "whistleblower" who warned the public of COVID-19. I previously noted (FAIR.org, 3/6/20) that Dr. Li was not a whistleblower, nor the first doctor to discover the COVID-19 outbreak, and neither was he ahead of the Chinese government. However, Vijay Prashad, Du Xiaojun and Weiyan Zhu's timeline of the Chinese government's response offers more clarity (People's Dispatch, 3/31/20, 4/7/20, 4/14/20).

Dr. Zhang Jixian was the first to discover the COVID-19 outbreak, and was not a whistleblower either, because she followed established protocol by reporting it to her hospital's disease control department on December 27. This resulted in an announcement by the Wuhan Health Commission on December 30, which is why Reuters (12/31/20) was able to report on this supposedly "secret" information in real-time.

On December 30 (the same day as the Wuhan Health Commission announcement), Dr. Ai Fen saw a test report of

unidentified pneumonia, circled the words "SARS coronavirus" in red before taking a picture of it and sending it to a medical school classmate. From there, it spread in medical circles before reaching Dr. Li, who had shared it with seven colleagues in a private WeChat group on December 30 as well. Dr. Li didn't consider himself a whistleblower, and asked them not to share the message to the public before it was leaked on December 31, the same day WHO picked up a media statement from the Wuhan Municipal Health Commission's website.

Dr. Li and his seven colleagues were reprimanded on January 3 (the same day China notified the US CDC) for not following established protocol, as Dr. Zhang had (who was never punished, but rewarded), and for potentially causing unnecessary panic, given that the SARS-CoV-2 genomic sequence wasn't identified and shared until January 9. While the Chinese government doesn't pretend to have handled the outbreak perfectly—as it apologized to Dr. Li's family and disciplined the police officers who had initially handled the case—it is hard to believe officials had a mandate to suppress knowledge of the novel coronavirus, considering nobody knew the true nature of the disease at the time.

Despite the Chinese government making much of this information readily available in their timelines, corporate media conveniently leave these crucial details out of theirs in order to advance New Cold War propaganda (Business Insider, 5/22/20; New York Times, 5/26/20).

ABC: Intelligence report warned of coronavirus crisis as early as November: Sources.

ABC (4/8/20) reported that—contrary to detailed reconstructions of the outbreak in leading medical journals—China was actually dealing with a serious COVID-19 outbreak "as far back as late November," when US intelligence learned it was "changing the patterns of life and business, and posing a threat to the population." But they didn't tell the president about this until early January, because "it would have had to go through weeks of vetting and analysis."

Another example of US propaganda trying to distort this history came from ABC News (4/8/20) falsely reporting (based

entirely on anonymous sources) that the US National Center for Medical Intelligence (NCMI) possessed a report showing that the White House was informed about the pandemic in November—suggesting that "China's leadership knew the epidemic was out of control even as it kept such crucial information from foreign governments and public health agencies." When the report was updated the next day, the NCMI's director, Col. R. Shane Day, debunked this sensationalist claim, noting that "no such NCMI product exists."

However, this manipulation of public opinion by the US government and corporate media appears to be working. According to a recent Ipsos survey, more than 30% of Americans have witnessed someone blaming Asian people for the coronavirus pandemic (even though new research indicates that travel from New York City was the primary source of the US outbreak, with New York's outbreak originating in Europe). Pew Research (4/21/20) found that around two-thirds of Americans have an unfavorable view of China, which is the most negative rating for the country since Pew began asking the question in 2005. This suggests that public opinion has been turned against China, despite it being the first to detect the virus, alert the world and provide a model for containing it.

*Omitted illustrations, graphs, appendices, footnotes can be found online where this article originally appeared. See Sources of articles at the end of the book for web addresses.

China pushes back U.S. empire of lies

By calvin deutschbein
July 31, 2020, IACenter.org

The U.S. ruling class has increasingly turned to misinformation and propaganda to maintain control during the COVID-19 epidemic. This includes concocting imperialist conflict with China. In response, Chinese journalists have consistently pushed back. An article titled "Reality Check of US Allegations Against China on COVID-19" from Xinhua provides a comprehensive accounting to set the record straight. The document is loosely summarized below.

Chinese solution, not 'Chinese virus'

While Wuhan, China was the first region in the world to report the virus to the international community, it does not mean that it originated there. In fact, the origin has still not been identified.

China builds 2nd hospital in 10 days.

Source tracing is a serious scientific matter that should be based on science and studied by scientists and medical experts. Historically, viruses have not been first identified at their places of origin. For example, HIV infection was first reported by the U.S., yet it is unclear whether it originated there. Much evidence also suggests that the 1918 pandemic (H1N1 virus), sometimes called "Spanish flu," did not originate in Spain.

Today, the World Health Organization has strict guidelines against naming diseases after their purported origins.

While far from conclusive about the origins of COVID-19, an article in the International Journal of Antimicrobial Agents

dated June 2020 is titled "SARS-COV-2 was already spreading in France in late December 2019." It reports that researchers found that an intensive care unit patient who had been admitted for an influenza-like illness between Dec. 2, 2019, and Jan. 16, 2020, was later shown to have tested positive for COVID-19. The patient had no link to China and had not recently traveled abroad.

To label a virus after the first location that puts up an effective response only serves to demonize responses to new diseases, especially when that label is meant to place blame.

A pandemic is a global public health emergency. There is no such thing as a "state responsibility" attached to the first country reporting cases. HIV/AIDS was first detected in the U.S. in the 1980s. It has since spread to the whole world, but the international community has never demanded that the U.S. take responsibility or pay reparations.

On May 4, one of the world's top magazines, Nature, published a study by experts from China, the U.S. and Britain showing that the three major groups of nonpharmaceutical interventions taken by China — inter-city travel restrictions, early identification and isolation of cases, plus contact restrictions and social distancing — not only contained the spread of COVID-19 in China, but also bought precious time for the world. The study details that without these measures, Chinese coronavirus cases would probably have been multiplied times 67 to over 7 million.

How China contained COVID-19

While China has been accused of failing to stop COVID-19, in fact it took the most stringent measures within the shortest possible time, keeping the virus largely within Wuhan. Statistics show that very few cases were exported from China. New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo has pointed to research by Northeastern University showing that strains of the novel coronavirus found in his state were not from China. The New York Times cited U.S. research that most New York coronavirus cases did not come from Asia.

China put Wuhan under a temporary lockdown as of Jan. 23

— meaning that no outbound commercial flights or train services took place from Jan. 24 through April 8. It was impossible for Wuhan residents to travel overseas during this period.

When Wuhan was shut down on Jan. 23, only one case had been publicly confirmed in the U.S. When the U.S. on Feb. 2 closed its borders to all Chinese citizens and foreigners who had been to China within the previous 14 days, there were only eight confirmed cases in the U.S., according to official data. When the U.S. declared a national emergency on March 13, the number of its confirmed cases had ballooned to 1,896. When China lifted the lockdown on Wuhan, the number of confirmed cases in the U.S. had risen to 400,000. It took less than 100 days for the number of confirmed cases in the U.S. to surge from 1 to 1 million.

China collaborated with WHO and U.S. against COVID-19

On Dec. 27, 2019, Dr. Zhang Jixian, director of the respiratory and critical care medicine department of Hubei Provincial Hospital of Integrated Chinese and Western Medicine, had reported three cases of pneumonia of unknown cause immediately after receiving the patients. This was the first report of suspected cases of a new disease by local authorities in China. On the same day, the Wuhan CDC conducted epidemiological investigation and testing on those patients.

After the first public reporting of the pneumonia by the Wuhan Municipal Health Commission on Dec. 13, 2019, China completed the identification and sequencing of the virus as early as Jan. 7. It shared the genome sequence information with WHO and other countries on Jan. 11.

On Jan. 10, the Wuhan Institute of Virology of the Chinese Academy of Sciences and other professional institutions were developing preliminary testing kits and stepped up research on vaccines and effective medication.

China honors Dr. Li Wenliang

The U.S.-based corporate media have spoken at length and with great inaccuracy about Dr. Li Wenliang, including a CNN Opinion piece on Feb. 11 titled "China's hero doctor was punished for telling truth about coronavirus." The reality is far more tragic and less favorable to the political program of CNN and other corporate media.

Dr. Li Wenliang was a good doctor who died on Feb. 6 while treating coronavirus patients. He was a member of the Communist Party of China, not a so-called "anti-establishment figure." On March 5, he was named a "national model healthcare worker in fighting COVID-19." On April 2, he was honored as a martyr.

Labeling Dr. Li Wenliang as an "anti-establishment hero" or "awakener" rather than as a whistleblower is very disrespectful to Dr. Li and his family. It is purely political manipulation with no sense of decency. On April 28, the Central Committee of the Communist Youth League of China and the All-China Youth Federation jointly issued "May Fourth Medals" to honor outstanding representatives and role models of Chinese youths. Dr. Li Wenliang was among the honorees.

The Independent Media Institute conducted a thorough investigation into the media's unjust reporting about Dr. Li. In a three-part series published in March and April titled "Truth and Propaganda about Coronavirus," it concluded that the attempt of the imperialist media to describe what happened to Dr. Li as evidence of the Chinese government's suppression of information about the virus was simply illogical.

China reports accurately on the virus

China's relatively low number of confirmed cases and fatalities is attributable to the comprehensive, rigorous and thorough measures taken promptly by the Chinese government — such as completely shutting down transportation from Wuhan. Science magazine estimated in one of its reports that these measures helped prevent at least 700,000 infections in China.

On March 3, Dr. Bruce Aylward, a senior advisor to the WHO Director-General, noted in an interview with U.S. digital media Vox that China is not hiding anything. He expected that the data he collected through talks with physicians from various hospitals and other stakeholders would help corroborate China's data.

On April 17, in accordance with the law of the People's Republic of China, Wuhan issued a notification that revised upward the number of confirmed cases by 325 to a total of 50,333 and fatal cases by 1,290 to a total of 3,869.

Acting out of a high sense of responsibility to history, to the people and the lives lost to the coronavirus, Wuhan took the initiative to revise the numbers to reflect the facts it had gathered.

China's style of government was a boon

Viruses do not distinguish between ideologies or social systems. The Communist Party of China and the Chinese government have played a decisive and critical role in leading the Chinese people in the successful fight against COVID-19.

China's political system, which has effectively united and mobilized 1.4 billion people on a vast land of 9.6 million square kilometers, provided a strong political guarantee for China to overcome the difficulties faced by a developing country in order to pool all its available strengths and resources in winning the battle against the virus. What has happened shows that the social system and development path chosen by the Chinese people suit China's national conditions and that the CPC enjoys the firm and broad support of the Chinese people.

At a press conference of the WHO-China Joint Mission on COVID-19 on Feb. 24, Dr. Aylward said that China had rolled out probably the most ambitious, agile and aggressive disease containment effort in history. China's bold approach changed the course of the disease and encompasses the only successful measures known to contain COVID-19.

China committed to internationalism

China firmly supports multilateralism. All along the country has been in good communication and cooperation with WHO and has never attempted to manipulate the organization. The suspension of funding by the U.S., which had been the largest contributor to WHO, has been widely opposed by the international community.

China's actions with respect to U.S. journalists have been in response to the long-term oppression of Chinese media in the U.S., especially given the recent expulsion of 60 Chinese journalists. China has released information in an open, transparent, responsible and timely manner.

While Taiwan, as part of China, has no right to join WHO, whose membership requires sovereign statehood, the technical cooperation channel between China's Taiwan and WHO is unimpeded.

The Chinese government and people have provided many shipments of much-needed medical supplies to over 150 countries and international organizations, and these efforts are still ongoing. China has also leveraged its strong production capacity and promptly opened up its medical supplies market and export channels.

Preliminary statistics indicate that by May 6, Chinese provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities, institutions and companies had donated more than 9.6 million masks, 500,000 testing kits, 305,900 pairs of medical and other gloves, and 133,500 goggles to 30 U.S. states and 55 cities.

*Omitted illustrations, graphs, appendices, footnotes can be found online where this article originally appeared. See Sources of articles at the end of the book for web addresses.

Opposing War Propaganda Against China

By Margaret Kimberley
July 25, 2020, IACenter.org

IT'S MORNING HERE in New York at any rate. Greetings to you all. I want to thank this group for inviting me to participate in this very important meeting. I'm old enough to remember when Nixon went to China when I was a kid. It was said at the time that only a cold warrior could have pulled it off. Now, nearly 50 years later, the cold war has been resurrected with a vengeance and China has been declared an enemy of this government and Americans are being whipped into a frenzy of hatred and suspicion against this nation.

Now whenever we see a reference to China in the corporate media we always see the words communist party attached. This silly redundancy is war propaganda along with every other smear and slur. We are told that 1 million Uighurs are imprisoned when there is quite literally no proof of any such thing. China, is the country which first experienced the COVID-19 virus, was the first to vanquish it, and has a low death rate of less than 5,000 people to prove it. We depend here in America on China to produce masks and other protective equipment but China is declared the villain. The country that within one month of realizing there was a new communicable disease gave the world the keys to conquering it.

Instead the country which fails where China succeeds, in providing for the needs of its people and their health, is an international pariah, with most of the world barring Americans from travel and turning us into a giant leper colony. Trump speaks of the "kung flu" and the "Wuhan virus", but it is China which conquered the disease that has killed 130,000 Americans and forced a quarantine which has caused economic devastation to millions of people here.

But Americans get nothing but war propaganda. Trump and Joe Biden outdo one another bragging about who will be tougher to China. This week we saw the U.S. government violate international law again and close the Chinese consulate in Houston, Texas.

But the U.S. isn't alone. It's lackeys and vassals, commonly known as allies, follow the lead of the gangster state in spewing what can only be called war propaganda. Just to the north of here Canada's prime minister Justin Trudeau talks behind Trump's back but never steps out of line. When Washington ordered Canada to arrest Meng Wanzhou, the daughter of Huawei's founder, they did just that. The U.S. accused Huawei of violating U.S. sanctions by doing business with Iran. There is nothing in U.S. or Canadian law which permitted her arrest but like a good little puppet, Canada did as it was told. China retaliated and arrested two Canadians who remain under detention. But Trudeau doubles down and refuses to release her.

Propaganda succeeds, it is like music that one hears over and over again. We remember it whether we intend to or not. And threats to prevent members of the Chinese Communist party, some 100 million people, from entering the United States may seem laughable but the foolishness is serious and meant to get public buy-in for dangerous acts.

That is why millions of people believe that there are millions of Uighurs in Chinese prisons. The charge is false, completely made up, like tales of WMD in Iraq, babies taken from incubators in Kuwait, Libyan soldiers popping Viagra pills, and Russians paying bounties to kill U.S. troops. But the damage is done with sheer repetition and media acting like government scribes.

We can expect to see more incidents like the closing of the Houston consulate and the Chinese government will retaliate. It is frightening that otherwise sensible people can be turned into a mob ready to believe what they're told and declare a country which has done them no harm as an enemy. But that is not accidental.

The history isn't new. When the Chinese revolution occurred in the late 1940s there were arguments about who "lost" China,

as if China were the property of the U.S. and not a sovereign state. But that is what results from white supremacy as it plays out in foreign policy. China's history with Europe and the U.S. is not a happy one. The Delano family for example, yes FDR's grand parents, made a fortune trading opium. The British stole Hong Kong and now 20 years after they left are acting like the good little lap dogs that they are and joined in using Hong Kong to destabilize China. Canada and the UK aren't alone, Australia has joined in the effort too and even raided the home of a New South Wales parliament legislator who had done nothing except advocate for better relations between the two countries.

I have referred to four of the "five eyes" nations, the UK and its settler colonial offshoots the U.S., Canada, Australia and New Zealand. And as the imperial project reaches a fever pitch they all work ever more closely together.

While U.S. senators say that Chinese students should only be allowed to study Shakespeare and not science, a senator really said that, and babble about Communist party members, China forges its own way and of course incurs the wrath of the U.S. as it does.

China and Iran have an agreement to give each other aid and oil, and that means that the U.S. tantrums over sanctions will cause suffering in the short term but the targets may be the ones that prosper but of course that is why the aggression will continue.

I think it is extremely important that those of us who call ourselves members of the left know where we ought to stand. We must always be in opposition to U.S./NATO, allied vassal state aggression against China and the rest of the world too. We cannot be confused. Remember that when the U.S. speaks of human rights you are hearing from the country that has more of its population incarcerated, some 2 million people, than any other country in the world. Its military spending is larger than that of the next 10 countries combined. It allows police to kill 1,000 people every year. COVID-19 has killed thousands, impoverished more, and its profit making health care system is proof of a lack of human rights. We have to call out war propaganda

whenever we see it and hear it and not allow ourselves to be drawn into bogus arguments. We cannot use the first person when thinking about government statements regarding China or any other country. Our interests are not those of the rulers and we must never forget that.

SECTION 3:
Spiraling disaster in the United States.

'Things fall apart'

By Mumia Abu-Jamal
April 10, 2020, PrisonRadio.org

THE GREAT AFRICAN writer, Chinua Achebe, I believe, wrote a novel about the ravages of colonialism, which bore the title "Things Fall Apart."

He borrowed the title from the famed Irish poet, William Butler Yeats, who wrote "Things fall apart, the center cannot hold, mere anarchy is loosed upon the world."

A silent, unseen disease gives vent to massive unease and unleashes unprecedented fear.

We see, outside our doors, our windows, a world we did not know, that now exists.

Political leaders pose and preen, saying little of substance, and even less of sense. But in every utterance comes a fevered subtext — 'Praise me! Praise me! Praise me!'

While dozens and then hundreds die daily, and thousands, tens of thousands fall ill. Trillions of dollars dry up like fruit fallen from a tree, they fall rotten — unusable, gone like the wind.

Politicians fill the air with words, but no solution is in sight.

Several weeks ago. a pandemic came to visit the world's richest countries, and things fall apart.

From imprisoned nation, this is Mumia Abu-Jamal.

Transcribed from a March 27, 2020, audio recording on prison-radio.org.

Virus Statistics Reveal Class Truth

By Deirdre Griswold

The following is a digest of articles on COVID-19 by Deirdre Griswold that appeared in Workers World from April to June, 2020.

APRIL **14** — Because China is the most populous country in the world, and also the first to become infected with the COVID-19 virus, it is revealing to revisit from time to time the statistics on the epidemic's progress there, compared to what is happening in the U.S.

What can we learn from the way the People's Republic of China has handled this virulent disease?

As of April 13, the U.S. reported a total of 561,159 cases of the coronavirus, with 22,133 deaths. China reported 82,160 cases, with 3,341 deaths. In both categories, number of cases and number of deaths, the U.S. count exceeded China's by about 7 to 1.

This huge disparity becomes even more startling when seen as a proportion of the overall population. Per million people, the U.S. had 67 deaths. China had 2.

China's success in handling this extremely dangerous, and now worldwide, outbreak should be studied and give inspiration to all those fighting the disease. In this country, however, it is totally ignored. China is mentioned only as the source of the problem, never as an example of how to confront it.

The big difference comes from the way the economies of these two countries work. Profits for capitalist owners are the driving force of the U.S. economy. What happens to workers who lose their jobs may become a problem for local and state governments, but mainly for the workers themselves.

The coronavirus in the U.S. has upended everything from the

stock market to local businesses to employment. No one knows how long it will take for life to return to any degree of normalcy.

By contrast, the Chinese city of Wuhan, the epicenter of the disease, reopened as of April 8. Foreign Policy magazine wrote on March 25: "After two months of a near-total lockdown in many parts of the country, China seems to be getting back to business, with important indicators like electricity and steel demand and auto manufacturing returning to levels not far from normal."

China has allowed some capitalist ownership, but its foundation remains a planned economy that is controlled by the Communist Party based in the working class. That's the big difference underlying China's achievements in dealing with this dreadful disease.

May 4 — Deflecting anger on to China

The Trump administration is trying to deflect anger at its dangerously neglectful attitude toward the COVID-19 pandemic by blaming China. No surprise there.

It has been known from the beginning that the virus most likely came from a live animal market in the Chinese city of Wuhan, where it jumped the species barrier.

But Trump, counting on the impact of decades of anti-communist propaganda generated by both capitalist parties in the U.S., has stated that the virus originated in an unidentified "weapons lab" in Wuhan — a story first concocted by right-wing radio's Rush Limbaugh back in February. Trump is even talking about suing the Chinese government for damages.

This president is certainly not known for either honesty or accuracy, but his political base doesn't care. Racism and xenophobia are his "trump" cards. And he needs to blame someone for what has become the biggest U.S. medical disaster in decades.

Why blame China? Among other reasons, China's success in containing the virus puts the U.S. authorities to shame. And Trump can't have that.

As of May 4, the U.S. had by far the largest number of

reported cases in the world: 1,177,918. By contrast, China had 82,877

reported cases. Yet China's population is almost four times that of the U.S.!

What this boils down to is that a person living in the U.S. has been almost 57 times more likely to get the virus than a person living in China — even though China was the first country to have to figure out how to deal with this new threat.

In the U.S., there is another big factor affecting the rising toll taken by the virus: racism. African-American and Latinx people are dying from the virus at a higher rate than white people. This reflects the kinds of jobs that people of color are forced to take, as well as inferior medical coverage and dire health conditions caused by poverty.

The number of U.S. cases reported is undoubtedly an undercount, especially in oppressed communities. It is also becoming clear that many people can be carrying the virus without severe symptoms. Additionally, there is no apparatus set up in the U.S. on a national level to test everyone in order to confirm and curb the spread of the disease.

When COVID-19 first broke out in Wuhan, the Chinese government was able to move quickly and shut down the area. Those in the epicenter were ordered to stay at home while necessities like food were brought to them. Emergency hospitals to care for and isolate the sick were built within days.

China critics in the U.S. called these measures "draconian" in stereotypical anti-communist language.

Instead, Chinese strategies against the pandemic saved countless lives. This was made possible by the collective character of China's socialist system — and the confidence of the population in the decisions made by their leaders.

With a centralized leadership in control of the economy, instead of a hodgepodge of private owners competing for profits, decisive and timely action was possible. In addition, because of government policies, those living in the affected area didn't have to worry about losing their jobs or being unable to pay rent during the quarantine, even if it lasted for months. By the weekend of

May 2-3, China had begun opening up its economy again, very cautiously.

Trump and the right-wing are guilty of many crimes. China bashing is one way they hope to divert attention as economic conditions continue to deteriorate in the U.S. More than ever, people's lives depend on knowing the truth.

June 2 — Withdrawal from WHO

Smack in the middle of the biggest pandemic in a century, President Donald Trump announced he was withdrawing the U.S. from the World Health Organization.

One would expect Trump's decree to bring an outcry from all the people here who specialize in public health. That's happening, but it's not getting the news coverage it deserves.

What gives the White House occupant the power to disregard the medical community and dis all the countries in the world that rely on WHO's expertise to battle multiple diseases? Does Trump join imperial Rome's Nero in spewing out dictats just for the gratification of his ego?

But there's more to it than that.

What's the motivation for Trump's move? Clearly, it's not to protect the health of the population. Just the opposite. COVID-19 is a worldwide problem. People in the U.S. will benefit when a vaccine against COVID-19 is made available, no matter which country's scientists are able to come up with it.

U.S. fatalities from COVID-19 are the highest in the world of any one country. It killed more than 106,000 people here as of the end of May. And already tens of millions of workers in the U.S. have lost their jobs, due to the economic disruption caused by the virus.

It is a matter of extreme urgency that a breakthrough be made to prevent further spread of the disease.

Recently, the WHO announced measures to stimulate international cooperation in the development of a vaccine to counter COVID-19 and to make it available to all countries. That is exactly what the wealthy U.S. pharmaceuticals do not want.

Poorer countries are extremely worried that when a cure or preventive medicine is found, it will be patented by one of the U.S. pharmaceuticals and sold at a price that can bankrupt not just individuals, but nations themselves.

The one bright spot right now is that scientists in the People's Republic of China are working hard on creating a vaccine, and China has announced that it will be made available to the world.

This pandemic makes it clearer than ever that we need to get rid of the capitalist system that profits the very few and build a socialist society that can plan economic development to satisfy human need, not corporate greed.

June 24 — Facts are stubborn things

Take the fact that the People's Republic of China, with four times the population of the U.S., has had far fewer COVID-19 deaths, even though it was the first country to be confronted with this new disease.

How do defenders of the capitalist system deal with that fact? They don't. They just ignore it.

Yet according to the website Coronavirus Update, which tracks the numbers of cases and deaths all over the world, the facts as of June 22 were these:

The U.S. had a total of 2,356,715 cases of COVID-19 and 122,249 deaths. China had 83,396 cases and 4,634 deaths.

When seen in relation to population size, the contrast is even more remarkable. For every one million people, the U.S. had 369 deaths. China had just three deaths per million people!

At the beginning of May the U.S. had 206 coronavirus deaths per million people. In just seven weeks, that ratio increased to 369 per million.

China's figure has remained the same — three per million. Just one generation ago, China was still a poor country strug-

gling to develop. The U.S., by contrast, has boasted of its economic and technological prowess for at least a century and a half.

So what are the Chinese doing to combat the virus that the U.S. is not?

It was only a few months ago that we saw accounts of how the Chinese government handled the serious outbreak of the virus in Wuhan. An immediate quarantine of the area was established.

Contact tracing was implemented. Almost overnight, new field hospitals were set up to isolate and treat the sick.

China's strength relies on the solidarity of its people to work together in a time of crisis.

It is impossible to ignore the difference in social systems behind these glaringly different outcomes. The U.S. is unabashedly a capitalist country, one where competition is hailed as a virtue — even though the wealthy have the ultimate control.

Also figuring into the spread of the virus in the U.S. is the racism that pervades this society. A recent study by the Brookings Institution on "Race gaps in COVID-19 deaths are even bigger than they appear" concludes that "The age-adjusted COVID-19 death rate for Black people is 3.6 times that for whites, and the age-adjusted death rate for Hispanic/Latino people is 2.5 times that for whites." Racism pits people against each other and is particularly manifested in competition over jobs. To counter this, progressives have long fought for the slogan "A job is a right!"

China is a country transformed by a socialist revolution that relies not on competition but on cooperation and human solidarity. It is not perfect. How could it be in a world still dominated by capitalist imperialism? But its response to the pandemic shows how far China has come in its journey to transform human relations.

How different from the divisiveness that people in the U.S. get from the capitalist government, no matter which party is in power.

To overcome the imposed divisions in the U.S. that keep the working class from realizing its power to create a better world, change is coming now from the cooperation of movements rising against racism, sexism, mass incarceration and the oppression of immigrants, as well as by people living with disabilities and LGBTQ2S+ people.

Cooperation and solidarity: These are the greatest antidotes to any disaster, natural or human made. And a socialist system develops and strengthens these qualities among people.

June 29 — Socialist cooperation in superior

Databases that track the growth of the pandemic around the world are revealing a highly significant fact: The countries where there has been the most progress toward combating capitalism have also most successfully contained the virus.

Here are some figures, as of June 28, provided by worldometers.info/coronavirus:

Cuba stands out, with only eight deaths per million inhabitants. This contrasts sharply with the other populous islands in the Caribbean. The Dominican Republic, which shares an island with Haiti, has had 67 coronavirus deaths per million people. Puerto Rico, a U.S. colony, has had 64.7 deaths per million.

Fidel Castro led the Cuban Revolution to victory over the bloody U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista in 1959. He announced to the world that the Cuban people had achieved "a socialist revolution under the very noses of the Yankee imperialists."

Since then, Cuba has become a medical powerhouse, sending doctors and nurses to poor countries around the world suffering from imperialist-imposed underdevelopment.

Another country in Latin America that has successfully controlled the virus is Venezuela, which reports two deaths per million people.

Venezuela's neighbors include Colombia, where there have been 61 deaths per million; Panama, with 140 deaths per million; and Brazil, now in the grips of a raging epidemic with 271 deaths per million. Except for Venezuela, the economic systems of these countries are rooted in capitalism.

Venezuela is on a difficult road to socialism because of its dependence on oil and the world capitalist market. The U.S. government has attempted to destroy its economy by imposing sanctions. Nevertheless, Venezuela's success in keeping people

safe during the pandemic has in recent weeks led many of its citizens who had left the country to return.

Al Jazeera reported on June 28: "For more than a decade, thousands of Cuban healthcare providers have been living in Venezuela, helping to build up its health infrastructure for working people. At the same time, Venezuela has been subject to U.S. sanctions meant to destroy its economy.

"This led many middle-class Venezuelans to move to neighboring Colombia. But now, because of the high rate of COVID in Colombia, Venezuelans are returning. They are required to stay in quarantine for two weeks before moving around freely, a precaution against spreading the disease."

People's China, where the initial outbreak occurred, has now contained the disease. As of June 28, its COVID deaths average only three per million people, compared to 388 for the U.S. For the same date, new cases in China were 17; new cases in the U.S. were 40,540. New deaths that day in the U.S. were 285 people — and in China, only three.

Facts are facts. Health care is a priority in countries struggling to build socialism in a world where capitalism is still the dominant social system. Capitalism kills people in many ways, but nowhere is the documentation more stark than in the coronavirus figures.

Health care for gender-oppressed people complicated by COVID-19

By Sue Davis
March 26, 2020, Workers World

HOW ARE WOMEN and other gender-oppressed people, especially those from 15 to 44 who are of child-bearing age, being affected by the coronavirus COVID-19?

All women and nonbinary people will be impacted in many ways — including reproductive health care and rights, work on the job and on "the second shift" in the home and as members of society.

It's essential to remember that Black and Brown people are always the hardest hit by all kinds of disruptions in racist, sexist, anti-LGBTQ2+ class society — from nature's hurricanes (think Hurricane Katrina) to human-made economic crashes (think 1929 and 2008) to pandemics (think 1918).

Unfortunately, but not surprisingly, there is no good news overall.

But there are glimmers of hope and possibility.

Retired New York City midwife Ellen Catalinotto shared some good news with Workers World: "In a webinar held by the American College of Nurse Midwives on March 21 participants learned that as of now data from China shows the virus is not transmitted from a pregnant woman to her fetus and there is no evidence of the virus in breast milk.

"Many expectant parents are worried about giving birth in hospitals. They are concerned about risk of infection as well as restrictions in who may accompany the laboring patient. There is increasing interest in delivering in birth centers or at home. However, only low-risk patients are eligible and there are relatively few places where these services are available."

Telemedicine available for contraception

The role of telemedicine — online, remote medical care — offers many advantages for obtaining contraceptives. It keeps sick people from gathering, while protecting both patients and practitioners and is much less expensive.

A March 18 article by rewire.news detailed information about a number of telemedicine providers. Patients must fill out a questionnaire on a website or app and then receive a prescription after a doctor reviews the information.

Online sources include contraceptive provider PRJKT RUBY. The company, which prescribes and ships to 49 states (except North Carolina), "has seen a 10 percent increase in patients in recent days." CMO Dan Snyder predicts that will continue. Pill Club, which ships to 50 states, but can only prescribe in 37, "reported a 30 percent increase in the past week in prescriptions referred to them from other pharmacies."

Co-founded by a pediatrician at Stanford Medical School in California, Pandia Health, which presently prescribes in three states, but aims to partner with providers in 50, offers a virtual visit to a doctor for a prescription. Pandia Health Birth Control Fund offers financial assistance.

Planned Parenthood Direct, an app-based service in 37 states, advises patients to contact a local care center for financial help. Nurx, available in 37 states, also tests for sexually transmitted illnesses and will soon offer coronavirus testing and consultations for those who have been exposed and have symptoms.

But not for abortion care

Medical abortion care, which involves taking two pills, is restricted in many states due to anti-choice bias and not strictly medical science. As Dr. Daniel Grossman, an abortion provider and professor of obstetrics and gynecology at the University of California, San Francisco, told rewire.news: "The effectiveness of medication abortions done by telemedicine is pretty much the same compared to having an in-person visit."

At present pills for medical abortion are regulated by the Food and Drug Administration under a so-called "Risk Evaluation Mitigation Strategy," which prohibits mailing drugs to patients. An experimental study in 11 states involving in-home medical abortion consultations, run by the nonprofit group Gynuity, was set up in 2016 with special FDA approval. It has successfully provided remote abortions for 600 patients.

Under pressure from the pandemic, Dr. Grossman hopes the FDA will lift the REMS "at least temporarily," as will states that currently ban telemedicine for medication abortions.

Trump cuts in public health 'exacerbate' pandemic

Probably the Trump administration's worst attack on sexual and reproductive health and rights is the "domestic gag rule," which went into effect last year on Aug. 19. The Trump revision of Title X regulations was that reproductive care and service providers at women's health clinics could no longer offer referrals for abortion or provide abortions in the same facility. This has had a profound effect on 4 million poor Medicaid recipients, including women and gender-non-conforming people who are youth, people of color, those living in rural areas, survivors of domestic violence and/or those living with disabilities.

Guttmacher Institute's latest statistics on March 11 show that the gag rule has reduced Title X funding by at least 46 percent after about 1,000 clinics left the network: "The Trump administration's ongoing attempts to undermine the [Affordable Care Act] and reshape Medicaid to better fit its conservative ideology have put the entire U.S. health insurance system on shaky footing in ways that may hamper the COVID-19 response."

The report continues: "And the administration's broadly discriminatory and xenophobic policies — including policies targeting people with low incomes, people of color, LGBTQ+ people and immigrants — will heighten the challenges of combatting an epidemic for communities that are already marginalized."

The report further warned that reproductive justice advocates

"need to guard against the possibility that [the administration] will seize the opportunity of COVID-19 to further restrict people's fundamental rights and access to health care."

COVID-19: Weapons of mass incompetence

By Mumia-Abu Jamal
April 10, Prison Radio Transcript

As of this writing 10,000 people have died from the impacts of the coronavirus also known as COVID-19. 10,000 and unless I miss my guess it ain't over yet. That's because the coronavirus is not slowing down. If anything it's picking up speed.

Almost everything we've heard about the virus from the media during the first week is false or misleading. I'm not talking about the big idiots crowing about it's a hoax.

It's not.

Originally it was a virus attacking old people. We now know that young people including children and even infants have succumbed to this disease.

There was an old woman in Italy who contracted the virus. She was sick and then recovered. She was a hundred and two years old.

Viruses are living things and like all living things, they surprise us.

The US government had months to prepare for the coming of the corona virus. They treated it lightly and nearly a thousand deaths a day proved that it is indeed deadly serious.

We will see worse.

From imprisoned nation, this is Mumia Abu-Jamal.

Transcribed from a April 8, 2020, audio recording on prison-radio.org.

The US's Wave of Hospital Closures Left Us Ill-Equipped for COVID-19

By Margaret Flowers
Published March 31, 2020, Truthout
Part of the Series Fighting for Our Lives:
The Movement for Medicare for All

A couple of weeks ago, as countries scrambled to protect their citizens from the COVID-19 pandemic by closing borders and quarantining travelers, the Norwegian University of Science and Technology, upon the "recommendation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs," took the unprecedented step of urging all students who are studying abroad to return home. In the announcement, they emphasized the need to return home if students are living in a country with "poorly developed health services and infrastructure ... for example the USA." The word spread quickly on social media that the United States had been singled out as an example of a country with poor health care infrastructure, with many people in the U.S. agreeing that we lack the capacity to handle the pandemic.

There are many reasons why the United States, which spends the most per capita on health care each year of any wealthy nation, is lagging behind other countries in health care access. Compared to other wealthy nations, the United States stands out for lacking a universal health care system and for prioritizing corporate profits over health. This has led to a fragmented health care system that is ill-equipped for a coordinated response in a time of crisis, such as the current pandemic.

If there is any question that profits matter more than health in the United States, here are three recent examples.

Health insurance companies pushed back when President Trump announced treatment for COVID-19 would be covered without requiring co-pays. America's Health Insurance Plans, an industry lobbying group, immediately clarified this would only apply to testing, not to treatment. Rising Pharmaceuticals, which

manufactures the antimalarial drug Chloroquine that is being tested for use against COVID-19, raised the price of the drug by nearly 100 percent in late January. Incidentally, this drug is still experimental and should not be used without medical supervision, as this Arizona couple did to their demise. And rather than purchase COVID-19 tests from the World Health Organization, as South Korea did, the United States chose to develop its own tests. This has led to a severe delay in access to tests, which means the U.S. missed an important window of opportunity to identify and isolate people infected with COVID-19.

Now, the United States finds itself in the dangerous position of facing a potentially massive number of cases of COVID-19, as Italy is currently experiencing, that could overwhelm our health care system. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimated earlier this month that between 160 million to 214 million people in the U.S. could be infected over the next year or so if nothing were done to stop the spread of the virus. Although steps are increasingly being taken, such as closing schools, banning large gatherings and shutting down nonessential businesses, the current rise of cases in the U.S. is steeper than in countries that are experiencing significant difficulties, such as France, Germany, Spain and Italy.

According to the Global Health Security Index, the United States ranks 175th out of 195 countries for access to health care. Italy ranks 74th and it is having problems with overcrowded hospitals and being forced to prioritize patients for intensive care based on their likelihood of surviving.

Since 1975, while the U.S. population has risen from 216 million people to 331 million, the total number of hospital beds has declined from 1.5 million to 925,000. This decline followed President Nixon's 1973 Health Maintenance Organization Act, which allowed the privatization of health care. The United States currently has only 2.8 hospital beds per 1,000 residents, just a little over half the average of 5.4 beds per 1,000 residents in other wealthy countries.

According to the American Hospital Association, there are nearly 70,000 intensive care unit beds for adults. This won't be nearly enough to care for the estimated 2 million people who

could be hospitalized for COVID-19. Most intensive care units are near full capacity on any given day. On March 27, New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo stated that New York City will need an additional 87,000 hospital beds including 37,000 more intensive care unit beds on top of the 3,000 that currently exist.

New York City has been inundated with cases of COVID-19. As of this writing, there are nearly 50,000 cases in New York, most of them in and around the city, making it the 6th highest place in the world. Doctors and nurses report confusion over policies regarding the pandemic and shortages of critical supplies such as personal protective equipment, tests and medical devices, including ventilators. The governor reached out to President Trump to ask the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to build temporary health care facilities, and so far, they have repurposed four buildings to create 4,000 beds and are looking at four more facilities plus using college dormitories and hotels as temporary hospitals. A 750-bed naval hospital ship just docked in Manhattan, in preparation for mid-April when they expect the number of cases to peak.

Where Did the Hospital Beds Go?

Hospitals are closing in the United States at an alarming rate. In 2018, an audit of hospitals by Morgan Stanley found that 8 percent of them are at risk of closing and an additional 10 percent are on a weak financial footing. In 2018, the American Hospital Association estimated that 30 hospitals will close each year and the number is expected to rise over time.

The United States currently has only 2.8 hospital beds per 1,000 residents, just a little over half the average of 5.4 beds per 1,000 residents in other wealthy countries.

Rural hospitals are closing the fastest. Over 120 have closed down since 2010. A report by the Chartis Center for Rural Health found another 453 of the 1,844 that remain are at risk of closing. The highest number of rural hospital closures, 19, occurred in 2019. Six rural hospitals have already been shut down this year.

Roughly 20 percent of the U.S. population lives in a rural area.

Residents of rural areas tend to be older, sicker and poorer than in other areas. They require more care and often can't pay for it, placing a greater financial burden on local hospitals than populations that are healthier and wealthier. Hospitals are also facing competition from outpatient surgical centers, which draw insured patients away who can pay for care, thus lowering hospital revenue further.

When hospitals are located in communities with high numbers of uninsured residents, they are particularly vulnerable to closures. According to the University of North Carolina's Rural Health Research Program, the 17 states that did not expand Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act had the highest number of hospital closures. Texas lost the most hospitals, followed by Tennessee, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi and North Carolina. Over half of the remaining rural hospitals in Texas and Tennessee and more than a third of hospitals in Oklahoma and Georgia are at risk of closing due to their weak financial position.

Failing rural hospitals are preyed upon by large corporations that take them over, extract their revenues and then allow them to lapse into bankruptcy. Kaiser Health News describes one case of a Miami, Florida-based corporation, EmpowerHMS, that bought 18 hospitals in the South and Midwest. EmpowerHMS ran a lucrative but fraudulent laboratory operation out of the hospitals, bringing in tens of millions of dollars, while the hospitals themselves lacked basic supplies and equipment. In the end, 12 of the hospitals went bankrupt and eight closed. Towns were not only devastated by the loss of their local hospital and the jobs that went with it, but they were also cheated out of hundreds of thousands of dollars in unpaid property taxes.

When hospitals close down in rural areas, more people die of preventable causes. In general, the Pew Research Center found people living in rural areas travel twice as far as people living in urban and suburban areas to get to the hospital. According to a study by the National Bureau of Economic Research, mortality rates rise by 5.9 percent when hospitals disappear, especially for people with emergencies such as strokes and heart attacks that require immediate attention.

Hospital closures in cities also tend to occur in areas that

serve poor communities and often populations of color. Like rural hospitals, they may be bought by a large corporate hospital system when they are failing and then allowed to go bankrupt. It is often more profitable to redevelop them in a gentrifying area than to keep them open. The 17 states that did not expand Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act had the highest number of hospital closures.

This is what happened last September to Hahnemann Hospital in Philadelphia, which served a predominantly Black and Brown community for 178 years and is now slated for redevelopment. Providence Hospital in Washington, D.C., St. Vincent's Hospital in the Greenwich Village area of New York City and St. Vincent Medical Center in the Westlake neighborhood of Los Angeles, which also provided care for over a hundred years to low-income communities of color, have also been shuttered.

In other cities, hospitals may stay open but close down essential services to make way for more lucrative fields such as orthopedics and cardiovascular disease. MedStar, a Washington, D.C.-based corporation that owns 10 hospitals in Maryland as well as physician practices, laboratories, long-term care centers and other health facilities, abruptly closed whole departments that provided obstetric, pediatric and psychiatric care in recent years. Health care activists, doctors and patients protest outside Union Memorial Hospital, owned by Med Star, in Baltimore, Maryland, on May 10, 2018. Med Star has been closing essential departments where they are not profitable.

==image Health care activists, doctors and patients protest outside Union Memorial Hospital, owned by Med Star, in Baltimore, Maryland, on May 10, 2018. Med Star has been closing essential departments where they are not profitable.

Profits Before Patients Is a Failed Model

As COVID-19 spreads around the world, now impacting over 700,000 people in 194 countries and territories, there is a clear difference in how well various countries are containing the pandemic. Those countries that have universal, publicly financed health care systems are better able to coordinate their responses

and care for those who are ill. They have been the fastest to slow the spread of the virus.

For example, a World Health Organization mission reported that, "China has rolled out perhaps the most ambitious, agile and aggressive disease containment effort in history." China was commended for the speed with which it identified the virus, acted and modified its strategy as new information was gained about the virus. Now, China is sending medical teams and supplies to other countries that are struggling. "Having a healthcare system that's a public strategic asset rather than a business run for profit allows for a degree of coordination and optimal use of resources."

Other countries with single-payer health care systems have also shown their superiority to the United States in handling the pandemic. Patients are able to receive care without concern about the cost and health facilities already have direct communication with the government in order to coordinate care.

The Washington Post quotes epidemiologist David Fisman of Toronto, Canada, who says, "having a healthcare system that's a public strategic asset rather than a business run for profit allows for a degree of coordination and optimal use of resources."

That is the reason the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) is playing a fundamental role in the COVID-19 response in the United States. As the nation's largest publicly owned health care system, the VHA has a "fourth mission" to assist in national emergencies. Candice Bernd of Truthout describes how the VHA is currently coordinating the emergency response to the COVID-19 pandemic in cooperation with the CDC and the Department of Health and Human Services.

If the United States had a universal single-payer health care system like a national improved Medicare for All or a national health system modeled on the VHA, hospitals would not be closing down. A key feature of the House bill for Medicare for All is that it provides global budgets for all health facilities. They would receive a monthly check to cover the costs of providing care no matter what segment of the population they serve. (This provision is lacking in the Senate Medicare for All bill, and should be added.) The VHA owns its health facilities and similarly does not have to worry about turning a profit to keep the doors open.

Support for a universal single-payer health care system in the United States is growing. We can only hope that, in the face of this deadly pandemic, we will see a louder demand and the political will to finally join the rest of the world in treating health care as a public good.

*Omitted illustrations, graphs, appendices, footnotes can be found online where this article originally appeared. See Sources of articles at the end of the book for web addresses.

The Covid-19 pandemic exposes deep flaws in America's broken healthcare system

By Margaret Flowers
April 26, 2020, Popular Resistance

THE CORONAVIRUS CRISIS is demonstrating why it's time we replaced a system that exists purely for profits with one that puts public health first.

When it comes to the number of COVID-19 cases and deaths, the United States is off the charts compared to other countries. Although the USA comprises five percent of the global population, 32 percent of COVID-19 cases and 25 percent of deaths worldwide are there. By contrast, China, where the novel coronavirus originated, has one-tenth of the number of cases and deaths, despite having a population that is four times larger.

A disaster scenario is playing out across the United States, particularly in New York City where scores of refrigerator trucks have been brought in to hold the dead, hundreds of people are dying in their homes without medical attention every day, mass graves are being used to store bodies while mortuaries are overwhelmed, and health professionals lack basic personal protective equipment (PPE), ventilators, and dialysis machines.

Dr. Mike Pappas, a doctor there, has described the difficulties he and other health professionals are facing. The shortage of PPE means doctors and nurses are reusing masks and gowns and are sometimes working without them. They are wearing trash bags over their bodies to protect themselves and their patients from becoming infected. In an interview, Dr Pappas spoke about the stress of not having enough staff, having to clear hallways and the cafeteria to make bed space, and the reluctance of hospital administrators to buy more ventilators.

As people in America struggle to wrap their heads around the twin crises of the rampant pandemic and collapsing economy,

it is easy to blame the Trump administration for its failures to take rapid and effective action to contain the spread of infection and provide financial support. In reality, the roots of the crises precede Trump. The US would have fared poorly during a pandemic under any president.

It's the system, stupid

The current disaster exists in large part because the US healthcare system is the opposite of what is needed. It is fragmented, discriminatory and designed for corporate profits, not the wellbeing of the public. Even before the pandemic, the United States had the highest number of preventable deaths compared to other wealthy nations and a declining life expectancy.

Nearly every facet of the system, which is twice as expensive as other developed countries, is designed to extract profit whether it is the hundreds of private health insurers that compete for the healthiest enrollees while avoiding those with health conditions, or the pharmaceutical corporations that charge whatever the market will bear. Even hospitals are shutting down essential departments such as obstetrics and pediatrics to make space for more lucrative areas like cardiology and orthopedics.

Two-thirds of US bankruptcies are caused by medical bills

There are now more than 30 million people without health insurance. In the past five weeks, as more than 26 million people filed for unemployment benefits for the first time, five million of them lost their health insurance. The number of uninsured is expected to rise by more than 13 million by June. On top of that, tens of millions of people with health insurance can't afford care because of the thousands of dollars in out-of-pocket costs they must pay before their insurance benefits begin.

Even if a person has health insurance, there may not be anywhere to go for care. Over the past 45 years, as the US population grew by over 100 million, the number of hospital beds shrunk by about 600,000. Hospitals closed in rural areas because

they could not bring in enough revenue to keep their doors open. Another 453 rural hospitals are teetering on the edge of closure out of the 1,844 that remain. In cities, hospitals that served poor communities for over 100 years are being shuttered to make way for luxury housing or retail space in gentrifying areas.

Another flaw that has been exposed by COVID-19 is the supply chain for goods and equipment. In February and early March, when patients went to hospitals with symptoms of the virus, there were few to no tests for diagnosis because the US chose to create its own tests rather than purchasing them from the World Health Organization. There have been severe shortages of protective gear. States have been fighting with each other to get basic kits as suppliers raise prices by as much as 1,000 percent.

This situation has made the call for a national improved Medicare for All healthcare system grow louder. If the US already had Medicare for All, many of the problems being experienced would not exist. Under the Medicare for All system, as defined by the congressional bill in the House of Representatives, every person in the US would be covered from birth to death without requiring payment before care is given.

This would alleviate the real fear Americans experience of financial ruin. For example, in March a nurse sought care and testing for COVID-19 symptoms and subsequently received a bill for $35,000 even though she was never admitted to the hospital. Two thirds of personal bankruptcies in America are because of medical bills. Put people before profits.

There's a more fundamental case for a more socialized approach: it works better. A look at healthcare systems around the world that have performed well during the pandemic finds universal coverage, central planning, and the principle of health over profit are essential features. Even countries that are suffering from economic sanctions are doing a better job of containing the spread of infection than the United States.

Under a national improved Medicare for All, hospitals would not be closing their doors or shutting down departments that don't generate high revenues in favor of more lucrative ones. Every hospital and health facility would receive a budget to cover

operating costs and capital expenses. The days of investment companies buying up hospitals, running them into bankruptcy and leaving them stranded would be over.

Another key feature would be that the federal government would purchase pharmaceuticals and medical supplies in bulk to lower the cost and ensure states have what they need. Bidding wars and price gouging would cease to exist.

The US is an outlier in this pandemic in terms of the number of COVID-19 cases and deaths, and an expert predicts the next winter will be even worse as the flu season begins. But the US has been an outlier for a long time for spending the most on healthcare and still having poor health outcomes. Around the world, the countries that have handled the pandemic well, such as China, South Korea, Cuba and Venezuela, share common features of their healthcare systems: central planning, universal coverage and a focus on public health.

Whether America finally adopts a similar system depends on what people do to demand it, but there certainly has not been a more opportune time to make that demand.

Margaret Flowers is co-director of Popular Resistance and is an adviser to the board of Physicians for a National Health Program. Her work has appeared on Al Jazeera, Health Over Profit, Truthdig and elsewhere. Follower her @MFlowers8

Corona crash. You ain't seen nothing yet

By Marc Vandepitte
posted on March 30, 2020, Workers World

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MARCH 24 — In terms of health, the coronavirus is undoubtedly one of the greatest challenges in recent history. But it may also turn our economic system upside down completely. It is already clear that in the future we will look back on 2020 as a turning point, the beginning of a new era.

Gravity

COVID-19 is an extremely aggressive virus, comparable to the Spanish flu of 1918, when at least 20 million people died. Scientists assume that 60 percent of the world population may end up being infected. With a 1 percent mortality rate, that amounts to 44 million fatalities, about half of the number of victims of WW II.

We do not yet know how long this pandemic will last. For weeks, months or longer? Will it reappear after summer? CIDRAP [Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy], the prestigious research center for infectious diseases, states that we will have to maintain measures of "social distancing" for 18 months or until a vaccine is available. Top experts from Great Britain and the World Health Organization confirm this. The development of such a vaccine is likely to take between a year and a year and a half.

The coronary shock on a weakened body

The containment of the pandemic will thoroughly disrupt economic life. Entire branches of the economy are being shut down. All human contact industries, sectors involving human contact, sectors like the automobile industry, large parts of the service sector and so on. In addition, the economic engine is slowing down due to the decreased purchasing power as a result of the sharp increase in unemployment.

As we know, in most cases a healthy and strong body is immune to the coronavirus. COVID-19 becomes especially dangerous and deadly for the weakened or the diseased. The same goes for the economy. In principle, a healthy economy is able to cope with the corona shock. But that is precisely the problem.

Productivity growth (the amount of wealth a worker produces per hour) is a good indicator of the health of the economy. Over the last twenty years it is precisely productivity growth that has almost come to a standstill. Companies invest less and less in expanding and renewing their production capacity. Instead, they use their profits to buy up their own shares and they pay dividends more than before.

Profit rates (percentage of profit on invested capital) are also a good indicator. Here, too, we have seen a steady decline since the 1970s. A lot of productivity gains in the U.S. has been from intensifying work (increasing hours) or producing many low-wage jobs. The capitalists maintain profits by increasing their share of the surplus value produced by the workers.

Another indicator is debt. In 2018, UNCTAD [U.N. Conference on Trade and Development] warned of the vulnerability of the world economy because of the high global debt burden. Worldwide, the total mountain of debt has reached a record amount of $253 trillion. That is 322 percent of the world gross domestic product.

The cause of the 2008 crisis was the overuse of subprime mortgages. Now it is high-risk loans to private companies. This time this involves much larger sums of money. For Asia alone, the

payout of as much as $32 trillion of debt is at risk. That amount is about the same as one and a half times the total GDP of Europe.

COVID-19 will give our economy a heavy blow. But it is not to be blamed for everything. Sooner or later a serious blow was imminent. The coronavirus is too much of a shock to the already weakened economy.

The best possible scenario

The stock markets (minus 32 percent) and oil prices (minus 58 percent) may be a taste of what's in store. In China, the country that was first hit, but that also took draconian measures very quickly, the lost output is expected to be 5 percent this year. For the U.S., an annual contraction of 7.5 percent is to be expected if the crisis lasts three months. For Europe, a 10 percent fall in GDP is already taken into account.

Everything depends on how long the health crisis will last. If that is two or three months, then we are dealing with a temporary suspension of production. That will hurt, but with sufficient support measures, such a period can be bridged. In the best case — without any financial complications — it is possible to restart production as before and recover the costs in the usual way, i.e., on the population. This scenario would be comparable to that of the period after 2008.

As a reminder, the 2008 crisis had devastating effects. More than 20 million people lost their jobs and 64 million people worldwide were pushed into extreme poverty. The crisis hit government budgets and cost Eurozone countries 20 percent of their GDP.

Other possible scenarios

Another very real possibility is that the health crisis will last longer in some major economy countries. The Financial Times assumes that the impact will perhaps be "severe and prolonged" and that "the world might not return to pre-crisis behavior until well into 2021."

In that case, many companies will not survive the crisis and go bankrupt. Ben Bernanke and Janet Yellen, former and current

chairman of the U.S. Federal Reserve System, warn that in such a scenario the economic fabric will be severely damaged and the recovery will take a very long time. There will not only be a temporary suspension of production, but a rearrangement of the entire system. That realignment will come on top of the shifts caused by Brexit and the U.S.-China trade war.

But there's more. Reuters News Agency points to the fragile situation of the financial markets and states, so that in such a scenario the entire financial sector threatens to be dragged down into the mire. If that were to happen, the consequences would be catastrophic. In 1980 the total value of financial markets was about the same as the real economy; now it is four times larger. In addition, there are hardly any barriers between the various sectors of the financial world. If one part is affected, the crisis spreads like a virus over the whole. Such a financial tsunami could cause large parts of the system to collapse.

Beyond financial doping

In order to absorb an immediate shock, monetary measures such as bridging loans, loan guarantees, forbearance, spread of payment, etc. are needed first and foremost. But in order to keep the markets stable, a lot of money is being pumped into the financial markets today (so-called Quantitative Easing or QE). That in itself shows how shaky and absurd our economic household has become.

QE can actually be seen as a kind of doping, a temporary boost for the patient, but one that only makes him sicker in the long term. QE, along with very low interest rates, has led to a massive financial bubble and to today's many zombie banks and companies. (Zombie companies are companies without reserves. At the slightest problem, they get into trouble and risk bankruptcy.)

Our financial system is completely diseased. No fewer than 147 individual national banking crises occurred between 1970 and 2011, according to the [International Monetary Fund]. It's time to put the banking system in government hands and to dismantle casino capitalism. In this way we can save ourselves

perverse financial crashes and invest our savings in a social and sustainable way.

Never waste a crisis

Monetary measures are necessary but by no means sufficient. In the long run, they may even worsen the disease. In order to maintain purchasing power and to prevent companies from going bankrupt, fiscal measures are now especially and urgently needed:

direct support for families or companies. This could be in the form of providing cash to families, canceling energy bills, supplementing unemployment benefits, bridging funds for businesses, temporarily canceling taxes, etc. In Hong Kong, the majority of the residents receive $1,280. In Singapore, all adults receive a sum of money. Bernie Sanders wants to pay $2,000 a month to all families until the end of the crisis.

Once the emergency measures have been relaxed, fiscal measures can also take the form of big government projects and assignments. They can offset lost economic growth and absorb increased unemployment. There is no shortage of potential candidates for such projects.

For example, this crisis has revealed that health care in many countries could use a serious investment. The same goes for a lot of other sectors. And of course there is global warming. The corona crisis is the perfect time to launch a Green New Deal. We are talking about a real GND, ambitious enough to save the planet and not the fake European Union GND, which above all wants to safeguard the profits of the big companies. If the crisis continues for a long time, a thorough realignment of the entire economy will be imposed anyway.

For the time being, most countries in Europe want to spend barely 1 percent of their GDP; in Germany on the other hand, it is 4 percent, and in the U.S. 5 percent. Martin Wolf, chief economist of the Financial Times, has a clear device: "In war, governments spend freely. Now, too, they must mobilize their resources to prevent a disaster. Think big. Act now. Together." (Financial Times, March 17)

Who is going to pay?

The whole question is who's going to pay this peppered bill. It would be unacceptable if the crisis were passed on to ordinary people again. The fiscal measures can be financed in three ways: by taking on debts, by printing ordinary money or by activating dormant capital.

Taking on new debts, such as in 2008, will result in a new round of austerity. We must vigorously oppose this. Even Rana Foroohar of the Financial Review thinks this is reckless: "If we want capitalism and liberal democracy to survive COVID-19, we cannot afford to repeat the mistaken 'socialize the losses, privatize the gains' approach of a decade ago." (March 23)

Printing money to stimulate the real economy is an abomination to neoliberals and is even forbidden in Europe. But the corona crisis is an excellent opportunity to break that dogma. According to Paul De Grauwe of the London School of Economics, this measure is even necessary to keep the Eurozone together. The third way is also obvious. Forty years of neoliberal policy mean that wealthy individuals and large companies today have so much "surplus of capital" that they don't know what to do with it. It is these thousands upon thousands of billions of dollars that they park in tax havens. It is time for a real corona tax targeting the super-rich.

We can learn from the Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius here. Faced with a pandemic from the year 165 onwards, he confiscated capital from the aristocracy. The common people were given money to pay for the funerals of the pandemic victims.

In times of crisis, we must dare to think and act boldly. Milton Friedman, one of the high priests of neoliberalism, already knew it: "When that crisis occurs, the actions that are taken depend on the ideas that are lying around." It is up to us to put forward the good ideas.

The Hammer and the Dance: Why Reopening Now Will Kill

Chris Brooks
May 1, 2020, Labor Notes

This is a time of deep uncertainty. The coronavirus has been the leading cause of death in the United States since April 7, but scientist and doctors are only just beginning to understand it. It turns out that COVID-19 is much more than just a respiratory disease; it also attacks the brain, kidneys, heart, and blood vessels. Science, one of the world's top academic journals, said that "the virus acts like no pathogen humanity has ever seen."

If an enigmatic global pestilence weren't enough, workers are being squeezed in an ever-tightening vice grip between mass unemployment and economic misery on the one hand and returning to work without adequate protections on the other.

Many states are now racing to reopen their economies, even though the daily number of new confirmed cases is holding steady nationally. In the absence of a comprehensive nationwide plan, if workers go back to their jobs now we will likely see further spikes in the number of cases, and more deaths.

To see why, it's useful to start with an understanding of how things got so bad in the first place and why the move to reopen the economy now is so dangerous.

UNDERSTANDING GOVERNMENT RESPONSES, IN THREE GRAPHS

The U.S. and South Korea had their first confirmed cases of the coronavirus on the same day, January 20.

Within a week, South Korea's government declared a national emergency and marshaled all of its resources for a coordinated effort to mass-produce test kits and then trace the contacts of

infected persons going back two weeks, so the contacts could be quarantined.

By the end of March, South Korea had conducted over 300,000 tests, for a per capita rate more than 40 times that of the United States. As a result of testing, testing, testing, and tracing, South Korea went from a high approaching 1,000 new confirmed cases a day in late February and early March to averaging about 10 a day, as you can see in the first graph. On Thursday the Korea Centres for Disease Control and Prevention announced that the country had zero new domestic cases, despite 29 million voters participating in national elections just two weeks ago.

In the U.S., despite President Trump's non-stop boasts, we are still facing a mass shortage of testing and there is little contact tracing. States have been left to hunt for test kits and figure out a policy on their own. In the second graph you see the result: the U.S. has not significantly reduced the daily average of new confirmed cases. We've merely plateaued the number of new cases and deaths at almost their highest level. Yet the U.S. is moving towards reopening the economy—which means that, at best, we will continue to see the same high number of new cases every day and that, at worst, cases and deaths will climb.

The third graph is from the Health Department of New York City, the epicenter of the disease in the United States. City residents dying from the virus per capita have outpaced even Italy, the hardest hit country in Europe. Now the number of new confirmed cases is declining, but the city is far from an aggressive plan like South Korea's. It continues to struggle to obtain the test kits needed and the state has barely begun a contact tracing program. Like every other state, New York has been forced to cope without any federal effort to standardize a response.

Even if New York City does manage to significantly reduce the spread there, the virus is spreading more rapidly in other parts of the country. And absent a national plan to dramatically increase testing and tracing capacity overall, the number of new confirmed cases and deaths is not likely to fall if states rush to reopen their economies and employers demand that workers return to their jobs.

WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS

Probably at least 85-90 percent of the U.S. population is still susceptible. That means the virus still has a huge field to play in.

A combination of deregulation, lack of coordination, bad tests, and bad sampling methods means that studies of the total rate of infection are seriously flawed, but the consensus is that the vast majority of the population has yet to be exposed. This means we are nowhere close to "herd immunity", the point at which a majority of the population has developed some level of immunity. The World Health Organization has ballparked the infected percentage of the global population at about 2 to 3 percent.

The White House has continually asserted that a vaccine is 12 to 18 months away, but many scientists believe that a vaccine will likely take years to develop, if one ever comes at all.

There is a tremendous, unparalleled global effort by scientists to discover and manufacture a vaccine at record speed, but the challenge before them is daunting.

There are no successful vaccines for any of the seven coronaviruses that infect humans and there are serious doubts among some scientists that it is even possible to vaccinate against coronaviruses. The fastest vaccine ever produced was for the mumps—and it took four years to produce. The failure to develop a successful vaccine against HIV despite decades of research is indicative of how challenging the process can be.

If a vaccine were created in 18 months (possibly cutting ethical corners in the process), it would be entirely unprecedented. James Hildreth, a leading international immunologist, told the Wall Street Journal, "I'm very cautious in telling people we will have a vaccine for COVID-19. All the other major vaccines we have—for measles, Ebola—have taken a minimum of seven years, and some as long as 40 years." Multiple health experts say a vaccine is unlikely anytime soon. Producing a vaccine by 2022 "is very optimistic and of relatively low probability," Robert van Exan, a biologist with decades of experience in this area, told the New York Times.

If a vaccine is not going to be available any time soon, then that means our best hopes are to find drugs that slow the spread

of the virus in the body—so people who do catch it don't die—and social distancing to slow the spread of the virus in the population.

There are currently no approved drugs that combat the virus itself, but there might be in the future.

Only 90 anti-viral drugs have been approved for use in the U.S. since 1963.

Scientists have been studying whether any currently existing anti-viral drugs could be used with COVID-19 patients. Initial studies of hydroxychloroquine have shown the drug to be a bust, but remdesivir has shown modest benefit to the most severe patients.

Many other drugs are now under study and in clinical trials, but given how few anti-virals have ever been shown to be safe and effective, it may be a while before we have a proven treatment that can effectively limit the coronavirus's ability to rampage through the body.

The disease is not going to die down much in warmer months.

While initial studies are not conclusive, the National Academies of Sciences say that the virus might transmit somewhat less efficiently in environments with higher temperatures and humidity, but it is not likely this will reduce its spread significantly. The virus is already spreading rapidly in tropical countries, and Australia and Iran saw fast distribution in warm climates.

There is good reason to doubt that immunity is permanent and that antibody tests are good indicators of immunity.

Immunity to seasonal coronaviruses (which cause the common cold) starts declining a couple of weeks after infection. Immunity to both the old SARS from 2002 and MERS, cousins to the coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2), has been shown to be short-lived, about one or three years.

The growing consensus among scientists is that exposure to SARS-CoV-2 provides some immunity for some unknown amount of time, but the WHO has warned that there is no evidence that someone who tests positive for antibodies is immune. Some evidence also suggests that infected people with no symptoms or

mild symptoms might not produce enough antibodies to develop immunity.

Our country essentially faces a choice between options: mitigation and suppression.

Mitigation means slowing but not stopping the epidemic. With mitigation, the majority of people return to work, schools and universities reopen, but we try to slow the spread of the virus through mass testing and contact tracing, home isolation of suspected cases, home quarantine of those living in the same household, and continued social distancing of the elderly and high-risk groups.

According to research by the Imperial College of London's COVID-19 Response Team, resuming life as normal with these mitigation protocols in place will still lead to outbreaks in workplaces, nursing homes, and communities. ICUs will again be overwhelmed, thousands will die—and we'll need to lock down again.

Suppression means using lockdowns for as long as necessary to keep the number of new cases as close to zero as possible. Suppression means social distancing of the entire population by closing non-essential businesses, schools, and universities—what much of the country has been experiencing since early April.

Moving back and forth between mitigation and suppression is the approach now favored by many governments around the world and by many U.S. governors. (South Korea did not have to resort to a country-wide lockdown like the United States did because its testing and tracing program is so thorough.)

This seesaw approach has been called "the hammer and the dance," where "the hammer" is bringing everything to a halt through lockdowns and "the dance" is accepting a relatively large number of deaths while keeping the economy humming along. The idea is to continue alternating the hammer and the dance until a vaccine is eventually developed.

If we reopen now, without nearly enough testing and virtually no contact tracing, we will have to lock down again once the next wave of the pandemic hits.

WHY THE RUSH TO REOPEN?

What is fueling government officials' rush to reopen? One reason is that Trump believes skyrocketing unemployment and a plummeting stock market are bad for his re-election chances. Another is that employers are eager for some level of consumption to be reignited so that they can resume making profits. In the end, it mostly boils down to big business being prioritized over public health.

How long could the hammer and the dance last? Harvard scientists have projected that, absent a vaccine or effective treatments, it will take two to four years of alternating between suppression and mitigation before we achieve herd immunity. We might be facing many months, possibly years, of seeing cities and states open up their economies, followed by eruptions in confirmed cases, followed by another lockdown.

This is how JP Morgan illustrated this idea. The protocol is to wait till infections are very low before relaxing social distancing.

But the U.S. has not brought new infections close to zero as JP Morgan "recommends." We've merely plateaued the number of new cases and deaths, as seen above in the second graph. Effectively, instead of reopening the economy at the bottom of the curve, with cases low, we are reopening while holding steady at near the highest point of daily new cases.

So we are essentially using the highest rate of confirmed cases and deaths as the new baseline— the new normal — for moving forward with the "dance" of reopening the economy.

Since the decision to open up and close down is being left to the states, most of which are still struggling to obtain test kits and even begin contact tracing, there is no common understanding among government officials or the public about when a state should lift or resume lockdown measures. It will likely depend on how much pressure is put on officials when the time comes.

In an April 15-20 poll, 80 percent of those surveyed supported continued lockdowns. In an April 7-12 poll, two-thirds said they were more worried about their state lifting restrictions on public activities too quickly, vs. one-third worried about "not quickly enough."

But who has a louder voice in politicians' ears, the people or the corporations? If we needed another proof that corporate interests dominate governments, this is it.

Low-wage workers will continue to bear the brunt. In slaughterhouses where the vast majority of workers are Black or Latino immigrants, workers have never experienced a lockdown nor any measures to slow the spread. As would be expected, their workplaces are hotbeds for the virus.

Transit workers, grocery workers, postal workers, and health care workers have had to fight tooth and nail for protective equipment. The more people use transit and go to retail stores, the more the virus will spread. The more the virus spreads, the more our hospitals will be overrun.

CORNERED EMPLOYERS LASH OUT

The picture is not bright for employers either. Mass unemployment means consumer spending is going to be down for a long time. Companies whose profits plummet will respond by more zealously demanding concessions, busting unions, pressuring workers to work harder so they can lay off "excess" capacity, and pressing governments to cut their taxes and strip away environmental and workplace regulations. The past two months have seen countless cases of companies refusing to alert their employees to COVID cases at work and forcing them to work without PPE.

Likewise, state governments facing massive deficits will seek to dissolve union contracts or demand concessions, try to get rid of their pension obligations (as suggested by Mitch McConnell), and gut public services.

Unions should prepare for what is coming: a drive for concessions fiercer than we've ever seen, in the midst of mass unemployment. And all workers, whether they have a union or not, should take collective action to protect themselves.

FOLLOW WHAT HAS WORKED

Here are four steps the U.S. government could take if it wanted to follow the successful models for fighting the virus being used in South Korea and Germany:

1. Use the Defense Production Act to redirect our domestic manufacturing capacity towards the mass production of COVID-19 test kits and PPE.
2. Start a national program for systematic contact tracing. To work, this program will require the hiring of hundreds of thousands of workers, which will have the added bonus of helping to lower unemployment.
3. Based on the information obtained from mass testing and tracing, the CDC should produce predictive models that show whether the spread of the disease is expected to escalate, hold steady, or diminish in the coming weeks, rather than states' determining their course of action based on competing and divergent models.
4. Remain on national lockdown until we have reduced new cases close to zero and we have a national plan in place that uses testing and tracing. That could then enable us to cautiously open the economy back up while mitigating the spread of the virus.

An Alternative Model-by Mike Davis

A phased reopening has to be based on the availability of PPE and testing. This is what is being proposed by Dr. Michael Osterholm, an infectious disease epidemiologist and director of the Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy at the University of Minnesota.

Only with enough resources on hand and testing in place can we pursue what Osterholm calls the "thermostat" approach: when infections increase, new stay-at-home orders are given.

He predicts that if the economy were entirely reopened right now, without enough testing or contact tracing, 16 million people would be hospitalized and 5 percent would die. That's 800,000 deaths.

But the Osterholm plan needs four improvements:

1. As states begin mitigation strategies and reopening their economies, unions must be at the table, as well as actively representing workers at the workplace. 2. We need workplace safety committees with worker majorities active at every worksite. 3. Until a vaccine or other intervention ensures safety, workers of all ages who have serious preexisting conditions should be guaranteed job security, preservation of seniority, and income support. 4. In every workplace provision of PPE, including an N-95 mask, must be standard and non-negotiable. Surgical masks alone won't cut it.

Mike Davis is the author of *Ecology of Fear and The Monster at Our Door: The Global Threat of Avian Flu.*

*Omitted illustrations, graphs, appendices, footnotes can be found online where this article originally appeared. See Sources of articles at the end of the book for web addresses.

As COVID-19 deaths surge, evictions and raids resume

By Devin Cole
May 27, 2020, Workers World

Federal, state, county and city governments are quick to raid and displace a group of people who are unhoused but have established a home encampment together. No assistance is given to those people to maintain their collective living situation. Instead, orders are issued to "clean up" the neighborhood or park or downtown, once again solidifying the role of the state and the cops in protecting private property over the lives of people.

THE GOVERNMENT is using the need for social distancing as an excuse. The attacks on encampments come at the same time police are also arresting Black and Brown people for not "properly observing" social distancing.

Capitalist leaders are pushing the U.S. back to "business as usual." As attacks on encampments of unhoused people ramp up, capitalist landlords are resuming evictions, while temporary and unstable safety nets for rent relief are rolled back in a hurry under this colonialist, capitalist system.

Occupied Creek/Muscogee land (Pensacola, Fla.)

On May 21, cops from Escambia County Code Enforcement, flanked by the Escambia County Sheriff's Office, raided and seized a homeless encampment here, displacing 10 residents who had been staying there. (bit.ly/36urLZe, May 22)

Pensacola is a city notable for being the main headquarters of the Blue Angels — the Navy "Flight Demonstration Squadron" currently pointlessly zooming all around the U.S. to "honor" health care workers — when its annual military budget allocation could house who knows how many homeless people.

Pensacola is perhaps equally notable for mistreatment of its ever-growing homeless population. The city has done next

to nothing to aid this population during the pandemic, as many of the private, religious-based shelters either closed their doors completely or only allowed a few previous occupants to return.

WW spoke with Mike Kimberl, director of the Alfred Washburn Center, one of the few homeless/low-income day centers here, and currently one of the even fewer still open. Kimberl is also an anarchist, musician and veteran organizer of Food Not Bombs, an antiwar food-sharing collective.

Asked what the raids and displacements mean for people who are homeless, Mike said: "It puts a strain on the already limited supplies. When the other centers and shelters stepped back, those that stayed open saw an increase in daily occupancy. These centers will be resupplying the survivors with items they had lost. I sat with one of the ladies affected by the raid. She told me that deputies were so rude to her and another lady with the threats of arrest that they were too scared to go back and get their belongings. She had literally lost everything."

Stating the group had been camping together for roughly four to six months, Kimberl went on: "Coale [Escambia County Sheriff's spokesperson] said that Code Enforcement did not provide the 10 individuals forced to vacate the property Thursday with information about available resources, but the county does plan to do that in the future. That information does little for people who [were] experiencing street level homelessness [even] before the pandemic. Now it is essentially useless."

Asked about social distancing, Kimberl noted: "There are a lot of emotions going on when [homeless people] hear those two words, but the best one, that would sum it up, would be fear. There was already fear over the pandemic. Most of our shelters closed or limited services, and they were already poorly serving the needs of our community. Most of the food services backed away. Now [the people who were raided] have 24 hours to be off the property. Most have lost everything they have. Everyone was already on edge. Now where do they go to call home? They most certainly feel socially distanced. Maybe socially betrayed."

Occupied Seminole Land (Miami, Fla.)

On May 13, there was a mass eviction and displacement of a homeless encampment in Overtown Miami, where dozens of tents and resources for those camping out were destroyed and thrown away by cops and other forces from the city. (rb.gy/0rr0qq)

According to an encampment resident, a sign was put up saying, "NO TRESPASSING" just a short time before a garbage truck and cops showed up to shut the encampment down. Despite Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommendations that homeless encampments and residents be left alone during the pandemic (rb. gy/r2oqf6), the city of Miami blatantly ignored this in the name of protecting private property.

Demands for justice made to the city have been met with silence. Perhaps it's no coincidence that on the day of the raid, Miami held a "grand" press conference to announce the first phase of the city's reopening, including private marinas. Wealthy Miami residents who were comfortably self-isolating are going back outside to ignore again the growing epidemic of homelessness in the city, while the camps are torn down just in time for [the wealthy] to go back to "business as usual."

Since the raid, substantial donations have come to the Dade County Street Response Disaster Relief Team, which documented the destruction of the encampment and works with the homeless population of Miami.

Occupied Comanche/Osage/Wichita land (Oklahoma County, Okla.)

On May 20, Oklahoma County announced it was lifting its moratorium on evictions. This means residents financially affected by COVID-19, who have been able to remain safely in their homes for two months, will now face the possibility of eviction and subsequent homelessness for inability to meet rent or mortgage payments.

According to Open Justice Oklahoma, more than 2,000 evictions and over 300 foreclosures have been filed across

the state of Oklahoma since the moratorium began months ago. One thousand evictions were in Oklahoma County alone, with 23 foreclosures set to take place in the county. (https://bit.ly/2ZuPGGP)

In the state, there have been over 6,000 confirmed cases of COVID-19. Over 1,000 of these, or 16 percent, were in Oklahoma County. The county also has the most COVID-19-related deaths in the state. (tinyurl.com/yd2kxnqc)

During the pandemic, more than 200,000 Oklahoma residents have filed for unemployment. The obvious, but still revolting, result is that thousands more people are at economic risk of losing their housing and becoming homeless with COVID-19 still rampant, while medical centers promise hospital bills a mile long and there's no home to retreat to if you fall ill. This assault on housing rights means more people will be at greater risk of death.

Saving lives? No. Saving profits and private property!

Capitalism is ill equipped to handle an economic crisis accelerated by a global pandemic. As a result, capitalist bosses must resort to more-extreme-than-usual cruelty in order to save their system from the chopping block.

Capitalists will allow thousands and thousands of people to become displaced, to become homeless, to suffer more, with many to die, just so these bosses can continue lining their pockets with profits and expanding their private property at the expense of workers and oppressed people.

It is past time we put capitalism-imperialism firmly on the chopping block and steadily hold it down until we can give the final blow.

Devin Cole (they/them) is the president of Strive (Socialist Trans Initiative), a transgender advocacy organization (tinyurl.com/ ybqs7rgd), and an organizer for Workers World Party-Pensacola.

Georgia 'reopens' with questionable data

By Arielle Robinson
May 27, 2020, Workers World Atlanta

EVEN AS GEORGIA reopens certain businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic, the state's Department of Public Health continues to make errors in tracking the number of COVID-19 cases.

One error found earlier this month on the state's DPH website led readers to believe that newly confirmed COVID-19 cases in counties with the highest infection rates had decreased every single day for the previous 14 days.

In this DPH data, the dates were reordered so that Sunday took place twice a week, and data from Saturday, May 2, came before data from Sunday, April 26. In reality, there was not a clear downward trend of confirmed cases. A spokesperson for Gov. Brian Kemp apologized after public outcry over the data.

Another error occurred in both April and May when the DPH at least twice falsely listed children as dead from the virus when they had not died.

The DPH data for May were unclear on whether more than 1,000 deaths from COVID-19 had occurred in Georgia. Later, the department clarified that more than 1,490 people had died from the virus.

Over the weekend of May 16-17, a DPH "processing error" once again made it appear that the number of COVID-19 cases in Georgia had decreased. The DPH said it had unintentionally included 231 serologic test results in the positive cases. Serologic tests are used to search for COVID-19 antibodies in the blood.

Because results from serologic tests are only considered "probable" by the DPH, they are normally not included in the confirmed cases. By including these serologic tests, the DPH

made it appear that COVID-19 cases in the state had suddenly decreased.

'Reopening' threatens working class

Georgia is among the first states in the country to reopen during the COVID-19 crisis. Despite officials saying the state was ready to reopen, Georgia's own public health agency either cannot or will not provide those affected by this crisis with accurate information to truly assess the danger the virus poses to the working class, especially Black and Brown people.

Besides making "errors," the DPH has also changed some of its guidelines on how it tracks cases.

When the pandemic started in Georgia, the DPH attributed the date a person was confirmed to have COVID-19 to when they got back positive test results. Since late April, the DPH has changed this to the day a patient says their symptoms started. If the patient is unsure, the department refers to either the day the test sample was collected or when the results came back.

With the latter method, it can take weeks for information on cases to come in, so it will look like cases are decreasing in the state — even if they may not be.

Georgia's DPH also changed how it measures infection rates, raising the standards used to determine if a county has a high rate. In the graph it uses to track infection rates in counties, blue represents a low rate while red means a high rate.

Dr. Harry J. Heiman, a professor from Georgia State University, remarked that if the DPH had kept to its original standards, about a third to one-half of all Georgia counties would be shaded red.

China, COVID-19, and the 2020 Presidential Election

By Duncan McFarland
May 21, 2020, Massachusetts Peace Action

In 1950 THE anti-communist right led by Senator Joseph McCarthy attacked progressives in the government over "Who lost China?" In 2020, will a major issue in the presidential election campaign be "Who's soft on China?" Regardless, the COVID-19 crisis presents the dominant anti-China sector of US imperialism a golden opportunity to advance its agenda for global hegemony by attacking China, perceived to be the main long-term competitor.

Trump's campaign made a pre-emptive strike in April accusing "Beijing Biden" of being soft on China, pointing to his actions as vice president and statements such as "China won't eat our lunch." The Biden campaign struck back saying that President Trump "rolled over for the Chinese" early in the year by not challenging Chinese accounts of the emergence and spread of the coronavirus.

The immediate motives were clear. Trump sought to distract from his own botched handling of the COVID-19 public health crisis by blaming everything on the Chinese and their supposed coverup. He used the term "China virus" encouraging anti-Asian racism and persisted in the theory that the pandemic started at the Wuhan Institute of Virology, implying dark motives on China's part. This in spite of a consensus of the scientific and intelligence community that COVID-19 was not man made. There were charges of Chinese hacking to steal medical research for a vaccine and demands for reparations in the trillions of dollars.

The Democratic Party, for its part, may be planning in the election campaign to attack Trump from the right on China, saying that Trump coddles authoritarian leaders like Xi Jinping – and Vladimir Putin, Kim Jong Un, etc. This of course contrasts to the supposedly democratic and humanitarian Democratic Party,

and rings of the Democratic undermining of Trump's quixotic relationship with the North Korean leader Kim.

The two camps may be attacking each other in the election campaign but they agree on bashing China. Mainstream media as well is playing its part in the anti-China echo chamber. The New York Times blamed what it called China's opaque, bureaucratic, and authoritarian political system for bungling the initial response. But US media downplayed subsequent effectiveness in containing the virus, implying that China lied about the facts. News about China's large-scale program of international solidarity in supplying medical aid to countries like Italy, Serbia and Iran was scarcely reported. Cuba and Vietnam's international solidarity were likewise hardly noted.

The roots of China-bashing are deep. For decades US capitalism-imperialism has been ambivalent about how to deal with China. Regime change for a counter-revolutionary, US friendly government is desired. But is the better strategy soft power or confrontation? A large sector of the US business community is heavily invested in China which is a major source of profit, for example, Apple Computer, General Motors, Starbucks. On the other hand, rightwing and neocon strategists like White House Advisor Peter Navarro (author of "Death by China") see the country as a dangerous threat to US global dominance in the "New American Century."

The tilt towards confrontation began in the Obama administration, with the pivot to Asia pushed by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. The Asian pivot or rebalancing policy was based on the analysis that East and Southeast Asia were rapidly developing and becoming the center of world economic growth. US forces should therefore be shifted from the Middle East to this region. This in practice meant surrounding China with military bases and adversarial diplomatic agreements. The military pivot was accompanied by its economic partner, the proposed Trans Pacific Partnership, a huge trading block excluding China and designed in part to isolate and pressure the People's Republic economically. The Trump administration disliked the multilateral TPP, withdrawing the US from the deal in favor of the unilateral trade war on China.

The White House paper on global strategy issued in December 2017 identified Russia and China as the principal "revisionist" competitors (seeking to change the world order) in a new era of great power competition. No longer was terrorism the primary threat to US interests, rather Russia and now especially China. This assessment was strengthened by the testimony of US intelligence leaders before a US congressional committee in Jan. 2019. China was depicted as a dangerous power run by an authoritarian, communist regime, suppressing civil liberties and Western liberal values, a threat to the American way of life.

China is regarded as especially formidable due to its economic strength; Chinese gross domestic product is projected to eventually surpass the US. Already the world's biggest trading nation, vast projects such as the Belt and Road were growing Chinese influence in the world, especially in the global South. China's support for a multi-polar global system was directly contrary to US hegemony. China was actively working with the Group of 77 from the global South on climate change and other issues, including opposing the illegal use of economic sanctions as an aggressive weapon.

Blaming COVID-19 on China therefore was not only a Trump tactic of disclaiming responsibility, but also facilitates the long-term anti-China program of the dominant faction of US imperialism. The favored tool of white supremacy could be deployed to attack Asian and Chinese Americans, preparing US public opinion for heightened tension and possible conflict. China does not want war but US imperialism but may be willing to take the risk.

US imperialist strategy of targeting China is very damaging not only to prospects of peace but also to necessary international cooperation in fighting pandemics and global warming, as well as working together for economic development and cultural exchange. The anti-China program is currently a consensus of US ruling elites, both in the Republican and Democratic Parties. This destructive path will continue unless power shifts to the more pragmatic wing of US capitalism.

Regarding the 2020 election campaign, the Republican Party seems committed to the anti-China strategy. The Democratic Party may be more ambivalent as forces within the

party pushed back at Biden's words. Asian American groups and others objected to the inherent racism. Corporations with major investments in China may want to tone down the rhetoric. The progressive wing does not want intervention and war. Consequently, a Biden administration might de-escalate and shift to a soft power approach instead of confrontation. In the long term, the new Cold War is bound to persist in different forms resulting from the contradiction between US and global capitalism and China's independent foreign policy and "socialism with Chinese characteristics."

Duncan McFarland is a member of MAPA and of Committees of Correspondence for Democracy and Socialism (CCDS). This article was first published in the CCDS Mobilizer.

Fossil fuel money funds 'back to work' movement

By Betsey Piette
posted on May 26, 2020, Workers World

PICTURE THIS: THOUSANDS of oil tankers surrounding the globe with nowhere to dock. The accompanying map shows the position of the tankers, mostly filled with oil, stranded around the world on May 4. They have no way to unload since onshore warehouses are full, pipelines are full, and under the COVID-19 economy, demand for oil is at an all-time low.

While the return on oil is negative, the cost of keeping it floating in offshore tankers costs around $30,000 per vessel per day.

In early May, the per barrel price for oil fell below zero. With shutdowns from COVID-19 impacting factory production, airplane travel and auto usage, creating a drastic reduction in fossil fuel consumption, the energy industry faces a crisis never seen before.

There is no clearer index of the magnitude of the paralysis and the problems dead-end capitalism faces. Too much oil and gas had been produced even before the COVID-19 pandemic. Now there is no place to store it all.

So just what does the powerful, politically connected energy industry do?

ExxonMobil, Koch and Mercer family members have funded critics of stay-at-home orders. Groups urging states to reopen despite rising COVID-19 pandemic death rates have historic financial ties to coal, oil and gas companies, and the conservative billionaires heavily invested in climate disinformation. According to DeSmog, a group tracking the money behind anti climate-action campaigns, many have links to Trump. (TheGuardian, May 21)

Ultra-right think tanks dismiss coronavirus

Early on, when COVID-19 deaths in the U.S. were just over 20,000, and not nearly 100,000 today, science deniers, including the misnamed American Council on Science and Health, were dismissing the potential danger of the virus. "It probably won't go far," ACSH, which receives funding from the energy, agribusiness, chemical and tobacco industries, intoned.

Another oil industry-funded and Koch-backed group, Americans for Prosperity, filed an amicus brief in Wisconsin, challenging the governor's and health department's stay-at-home orders. Under pressure from this well-financed lobby, the Wisconsin court struck down the governor's order, calling it "a vast seizure of power."

In 2018 AFP lobbied the Trump administration to cut $1 billion in funding for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. In late March, AFP Chief Executive Emily Seidel issued a press release opposing the shutdown of nonessential businesses, suggesting instead that they be allowed to continue operations. The group, which supported Trump's $1.5 trillion business tax cut in 2017, had also pushed for the U.S. to reject the Paris Climate Accord.

Trump's growing demands for a return to "regular life" are echoed by a web of think tanks that include the Koch-funded lobby group, the American Legislative Exchange Commission, AFP and others, built over decades with major corporate contributions, including from the fossil fuel industry and conservative "philanthropists."

Koch political operative Phil Kerpen claims that lockdowns are "unscientific" and don't save lives. That's contrary to a study by Columbia University researchers who estimated more than 36,000 fewer coronavirus-related deaths might have occurred had the U.S. entered lockdown a week earlier in March. (BBC-USNEWS, May 21)

There are many other funders of this reopen campaign, including the Manhattan Institute, which has received millions from ExxonMobil, the Koch foundation and the Mercer Family Foundation to question the shutdowns.

Reminiscent of the corporate funding of the Ku Klux Klan in the 1920s, energy-industry money today is fueling return-to-work and COVID-19-denial campaigns. These big-pocket funders are also a force behind "blame China" for the coronavirus — an effort to divert blame away from the Trump administration's horrific mishandling of COVID-19 in the U.S.

It should be no surprise to anyone following the fracking industry in the U.S. that environmental damage inflicted on communities is not on the energy industry's radar screen. The companies' profits-before-people coda has been the rule — wreaking destruction on "gas-land" regions, particularly Indigenous lands.

One notable impact from the reduction in fossil-fuel usage over the past months has been far less air pollution. What if a return to factory production were superseded by a major conversion from fossil fuels to renewable energy? What if the massive multi-billion-dollar budget of the Pentagon, the world's single largest polluter, was repurposed to fund these critical changes?

For any of these things to happen, we need a whole new system of production — one based on human needs and not corporate greed. In a word, socialism.

*Omitted illustrations, graphs, appendices, footnotes can be found online where this article originally appeared. See Sources of articles at the end of the book for web addresses.

The Scandal of Eldercide

By Cindy Sheehan
June 24, 2020, Justice For COVID19 Eldercide

NO MATTER WHAT one thinks of COVID-19, or the governmental response to it, there is one aspect that should be horrifying to everyone: The practice/policy of /intentionally/ placing COVID-19 patients in Skilled Care Facilities (SKF). The establishment paper *The Wall Street Journal* recently published the fact that 50k nursing home residents have died with or of COVID-19, which comprises 43% of stated deaths.

On its face value, this figure is gruesome enough, but when one takes into account that with at least five Democrat governors, this was/is policy is outrageous and in some cases reeks of pre-meditated murder.

As activists and compassionate humans, we must ask the question: do Grey Lives Matter? Not only to the establishment, but to anyone? While this practice was commencing, SKF were also forced to lockdown and no one was allowed to visit their loved ones or check up on their care, or lack thereof. Many SKF have long histories of elder-abuse and sketchy practices, but in collaboration with the state, the new COVID policies have not "protected" our elders, but, in fact made them even more vulnerable.

The further irony of this is that from the beginning, we were hammered with the propaganda (to me, it seemed a lot like the WMD lie before the invasion and U.S. destruction of Iraq) that if we don't shelter in place (SIP), social distance, or wear our face coverings if we do go out, then we will "murder Meemaw" when the official response regarding elders has been shockingly deadly.

Let's take the county that I live in, here in my home state of California: Solano. As of June 18th, 2020, the morbid death count was at 23 out of an estimated (Census 2020) population of 450,000

people. Sixteen of those 23 deaths disturbingly came from one SKF in Vallejo called: The Windsor House. [1]

This is one of the facilities that has a pretty bad history of patient "care." In one of the deaths, a 31-year-old man who was there after a stroke was roomed with an ill person, eventually killing the trapped man. This was reported by his sister who was not able to enter the facility or visit her brother.

Two-thirds of the deaths in Solano County come from SKF, but in California, over a month ago (I cannot find current stats), The San Jose Mercury News reported that at least 40 percent of all fatalities in California [2] were nursing home residents. This after a May 6th order from Gavin Newsom to open up SKF to accepting COVID-positive patients and offering up to "$1k per day" for doing so. [3]

I am sure that there are some honest and well-run SKF out there, but the ones that Medicare patients go in to are well-known for their avarice and lack of care. Newsom's policy didn't even make sense on the face of it, when many of our hospitals were empty and staff were being furloughed. What was the rush to house patients in SKF? When we add the other states who did this with California, it seems like a plan to murder the most vulnerable population of all!

(In doing research, the order from the California Department of Health has been "scrubbed" but we have found mention of it in many other places, footnoted here [4])

Probably the most notorious case of planned Eldercide is in New York with its governor Andrew Cuomo. Like California, Cuomo's original order has been scrubbed from the official records, but when, after much opposition, and after over 5,000 murders [5] he rescinded the order, it was pretty clear that he had given it. *It's a good thing some quick people saved the order before it was sent down the memory hole.* [6]

These complicit SKF were given immunity by Cuomo for anything that may occur by this order, but come to find out, he gets a lot of money from the sketchy individuals who run them. [7]

Not only is this despicable practice being done in California,

and New York, there is evidence that it's happening in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Michigan. We may never know the true numbers of this illness, or the numbers of those killed by their governors in SKF, or just by poor practices, but we know that thousands are from orders by these eldercidal governors.

The above facts are scandalous and heart-breaking. Someone needs to be held accountable for these needless deaths occurring under the cover of darkness with zero transparency. So, not being one to sit idly by (even though we can't really go anywhere), we have begun this movement for accountability, which is nascent, but already spreading to Canada where 87% of their C-19 deaths were in SKF.

We are working on an initiative to hold governors and others accountable for the deaths of so many in nursing homes. At least five state governors (and probably many more) gave the okay to house COVID-19 infected patients in eldercare facilities, reportedly killing tens of thousands of previously uninfected elders. Not only were these acts perpetrated, but as stated above, the facilities were given immunity from the governments for this practice.

These forgotten ones are our parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and in some cases, children. They are our friends and neighbors and one of these days, it could be US if we allow this Eldercide to go unnoticed and unpunished.

We have also heard anecdotal evidence of other urgently needed medical procedures being refused to these trapped elders due to all resources going to the COVID-19 patients. If you have stories of this, or any other elder abuse due to COVID-19 (such as forced isolation and denied medical treatment), we'd love to hear them and perhaps record them to expose this issue of the forgotten ones who have been put, by their governors, at the at the forefront of suffering since general lockdown began.

To repeat, this seems like premeditated murder. If any of the above (or other) has happened to someone you love, or is happening, please contact me at:

CindySheehansSoapbox@gmail.com

Or, you can also submit directly to our website here: https://justiceforcovid19eldercide.com/submit-your-story/

Our website will be updated as new information comes in. https://justiceforcovid19eldercide.com

*Omitted illustrations, graphs, appendices, footnotes can be found online where this article originally appeared. See Sources of articles at the end of the book for web addresses.

Corporate Theft of COVID $$

By Lee Siu Hin
August 3, 2020, IACenter.org

THE SMALL BUSINESS Administration (SBA)'s COVID-19 PPP Loan program never approved the funds for many small businesses with some small businesses reportedly receiving an insulting $1 loan while the Kushner Family, Wall Street investors, and Trump's pals and political connections from both parties raked in millions!

According to the SBA PPP program data made available to the public, some investment firms, including those that run hedge funds or manage money for wealthy investors, were among the businesses approved for emergency U.S. government loans. Nearly 5,000 businesses received individual loans between $5 million and $10 million, according to the data.

The program, meant to protect small "Mom-and-Pop" businesses, also doled out money to billionaire-backed corporations, chain restaurants, the members-only clubs, celebrity fashion brands, Girl Scouts, Catholic arcahdioceses, crazy art projects, right-wingers against PPP loans, and the businesses of people close to President Donald Trump and the Democrats. PPP in actually turned out to be a payout for the rich and connected with only tip money for a small business.

For example, in South Pasadena, CA, according to the local media *South Pasadenan* (The SBA data didn't disclose the exact amount, just the range):

- The largest recipient of PPP funds in South Pasadena was Total Education Solutions (TES) Inc., which received between $7 million and $15 million and reported the retention of 835 jobs or an average between $8,383 to $17,964 per job. But aside from those at their headquarters, these firms have no employees in South Pasadena.
- Collins, Collins, Muir, and Stewart LLP, a law firm that

employs 60 attorneys at five offices throughout the state, received between $2 million and $5 million, or about $33,333 to $83,333 per job.
- A total of just under $18 million went to the 580 businesses in South Pasadena, or under $150,000 per business. This works out to an average PPP payment of just under $31,000 per business. A female-owned catering corporation reported 52 retained positions. It received $102,535, or $1,972 per job.

Based on the open data from the SBA, here are just some of the big PPP loans given to the greediest, according to the multiple media report (PPP funds in range, unless amounts specified):

- Trump-connected loans: The Trump Organization did not apply for PPP loans, but many tenants at buildings owned or managed by Trump reportedly received funds. An Associated Press analysis found that as much as $273 million in PPP aid went to more than 100 companies that are owned or operated by major Trump donors.
- Irving, Texas-based M Crowd Restaurant Group, which owns 27 Texas restaurants including the Mi Cocina chain, was approved for between $5 million and $10 million. Ray Washburne, one of the company's founders, was vice chairman of the Trump Victory Committee in 2016 and donated $100,000 to the PAC at August, 2019.
- Muy Brands, a San Antonio, Texas-based company that operates Taco Bell, Pizza Hut and Wendy's franchises, was approved for a loan worth between $5 million and $10 million. Its owner, James Bodenstedt, has donated $672,570 to Trump since 2016, records show.
- CloudCommerce, a company with a close relationship with Donald Trump's campaign manager Brad Parscale, received $780,680.
- Phunware,. a digital technology company that specializes in the mass collection of smartphone location data and is working for President Donald Trump's re-election campaign, received $2.85 million.
- Vital Pharmaceuticals, the maker of Bang Energy drink,

gave $250,000 to America First Action on 2019, the only super PAC with the president's official endorsement; the company's CEO, Jack Owoc, is an ardent Trump supporter who has been pictured socializing with members of Trump's family, received between $5 million and $10 million.

- The Joseph Kushner Hebrew Day Academy, a school named after Trump advisor and son-in-law Jared Kushner's grandfather, reportedly received a loan between $1 and $2 million.
- Kasowitz Benson Torres, founded and run by President Trump's longtime personal lawyer, Marc E. Kasowitz, received a loan somewhere between $5 million and $10 million.
- Sushi Nakazawa, a restaurant at the Trump International Hotel in Washington, received a loan of between $150,000 and $350,000.
- Esplanade Livingston, a Kushner family entity that owns the land in Livingston, N.J., where the family's Westminster Hotel is. In 2018, Mr. Kushner divested his stake in the entity, from which he once derived income generated by that hotel, received between $350,000 and $1 million.
- Princeton Forrestal, a real estate entity owned by various members of the Kushner family not including Mr. Kushner, received a loan of between $1 million and $2 million.
- Patrick Broadcasting, which is owned by Texas Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick, a firebrand conservative and former talk radio host, received a loan of $179,000
- Albright Stonebridge Group, an advisory firm co-chaired by former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright received a loan for between $2 million and $5 million.
- The McChrystal Group, an Alexandria, Virginia, consulting firm founded in 2011 by retired four-star Gen. Stanley McChrystal, also received a PPP loan for $1 million to $2 million.
- Companies associated with the family of West Virginia Gov. Jim Justice received at least $6.3 million from the

program. Justice, a Republican, is considered to be West Virginia's richest person through his ownership of dozens of coal and agricultural businesses, many of which have been sued for unpaid debts. At least six Justice family businesses were approved for loans, including The Greenbrier Sporting Club, an exclusive club attached to a lavish resort that Justice owns called The Greenbrier.

- House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's husband is among lawmaker linked to PPP loan recipients. Paul Pelosi owns 8.1 percent of EDI Associates, which got a loan of between $350,000 and $1 million.
- Foremost Group, a shipping business owned by Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao's family, received between $350,000 and $1 million.
- Waxman Strategies, the lobbying firm run by former Rep. Henry Waxman (D-Calif.) and his son, Michael Waxman, received $500,000.
- Companies owned by or associated with Reps. Mike Kelly (R-Pa.), Kevin Hern (R-Okla.), Markwayne Mullin (R-Okla.) and Rick Allen (R-Ga.) Reps. Roger Williams (R-Texas), Vicky Hartzler (R-Mo.), Susie Lee (D-Nev.), and Debbie Mucarsel-Powell (D-Fla.), also received the PPP loans.
- The Ayn Rand Institute, a center dedicated to promoting Rand's well-known brand of hardcore capitalism, was approved for a loan of up to $1 million.
- NewsMax, a conservative website was approved for a loan up to $5 million; NewsMax CEO Christopher Ruddy has donated $525,000 to political committees supporting Trump, records show.
- Robert Kiyosaki, the best-selling author of the "Rich Dad, Poor Dad" series of personal finance books and games, received a loan between $350,000 and $1 million. Kiyosaki, who co-wrote two books with Donald Trump, has been a strong critic of efforts by the Federal Reserve and Treasury Department to support the economy since the pandemic intensified. On Twitter April 2, 2020, he

criticized the PPP just one day before it began taking applications, calling it "socialism for rich."

- The Americans for Tax Reform Foundation (ATR), was approved for a loan of up to $350,000. ATR, led by the anti-tax activist Grover Norquist, who has long supported a smaller federal government, said it didn't oppose the PPP. It described the program "as compensation for a government taking during the shutdown." According to their website.
- Citizens Against Government Waste got a loan of between $150,000 and $350,000.
- Art organizations for the rich and the famous, such as: Carnegie Hall, Whitney Museum of American Art in New York and the San Francisco Symphony, each of them has large wealthy donor based, still received the loan between $5 million to $10 million.
- Lerner Corp., owned by billionaire Ted Lerner. also owns a majority stake in the Washington Nationals baseball franchise, which just won the 2019 World Series, has a personal net worth of about $4.4 billion, according to an analysis by Forbes, received a PPP loan for between $5 million and $10 million.
- The Archdiocese of New York reportedly received between $5 and $10 million, while other archdioceses in Miami and Denver received between $1 and $2 million.
- More than 100 law firms received loans ranging from $1 million to $10 million, the SBA data showed.
- Lobbying firms that received loans included APCO Worldwide, Banner Public Affairs, the Conafay Group, Miller & Chevalier; Kasowitz Benson Torres, Wiley, Kelley Drye & Warren and Van Ness Feldman.
- Public affairs and strategic communications firms that received loans included Firehouse Strategies, Nahigian Strategies, Keybridge Communications, ROKK Solutions, Purple Strategies, FP1 Strategies, the DCI Group, Hilltop Public Solutions, Adfero, Gunster Strategies, Hamilton Place Strategies, the Glen Echo Group, the Clyde Group,

the Herald Group, the Messina Group, LEVICK, Civitas Public Affairs and Locust Street.

- Kasowitz Benson Torres, founded and run by Mr. Trump's longtime personal lawyer, Marc E. Kasowitz, received a loan for between $5 million and $10 million.
- Nearly 600 asset management companies and private equity firms were approved for money from the PPP.
- Rosenblatt Securities, which commands one of the largest physical presences on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange, received between $1 million and $2 million.
- Boies Schiller Flexner, the high-priced law firm run by David Boies, received between $5 million and $10 million.
- Wiley Rein, which has a large lobbying practice focusing on trade issues, received between $5 million and $10 million.
- Van Ness Feldman and Beveridge & Diamond, two law firms that focus on helping energy industry clients push their agendas in Washington, received loans between $2 million and $5 million.
- Semper Investment Firm, which bets more than $2.5 billion on mortgage and other asset-backed securities, received a $726,200 loan.
- Domini Impact Investments LLC, a mutual fund manager with about $2 billion under management, received a loan.
- Brevet Holdings LLC, a $1.2 billion lending firm, also received a loan.
- Truvvo Wealth Management LP, which manages more than $2 billion for large families and institutions, received a loan.
- PF Chang's, an expensive fake Chinese restaurant chain, backed by private equity firm TriArtisan Capital Advisors, was reportedly approved for a loan between $5 million and $10 million.
- Dallas-based TGI Fridays, which has around 500 restaurants nationwide, obtained between $5 million and $10

million. PF Chang's and TGI Fridays both owned by the New York private equity firm TriArtisan Capital Advisors.

- Kanye West's clothing-and-sneaker brand Yeezy received a loan of between $2 million and $5 million.
- Road Dog Touring, Inc. a Nashville company was approved for a loan of $2 million to $5 million. The company owns the official website of country singer Tim McGraw and R & B artist Faith Hill.
- Good American, the jeans and activewear line of Khloe Kardashian and her business partner Emma Grede, obtained a loan of between $1 million and $2 million.
- Draper James, Reese Witherspoon's Southern-themed clothing brand, received between $350,000 and $1 million.
- Nobu, the luxury sushi and hotel chain founded by actor Robert De Niro and celebrity chef Nobu Matsuhisa, reportedly received between $11 million and $28 million.
- The National Girl Scouts of America received a loan between $5 and $10 million; in addition, more than 30 Girls Scout chapters nationwide received PPP loans. The Girl Scouts of Northern California, for example, received between $2 and $5 million and the Girl Scouts of Colorado, Connecticut, and Illinois each received between $1 and $2 million.
- Soho House, the billionaire-backed private members-only club, reportedly received six different loans between $350,000 and $10 million for its Los Angeles, Chicago, Miami, and New York locations.
- Burning Man, the iconic 'commerce-free' festival, received between $2 and $5 million.
- Jeff Koons, a modernist sculptor whose "Rabbit" sculpture fetched $91 million at auction in 2019, was approved for $1 million to $2 million.

The capitalist COVID-19 money-grab came during a prolonged recession. Tens of thousands of small businesses may be gone forever with millions of people losing their jobs. A

permanent economic crisis could lead to more state and local budget shortfalls.

According to the Economic Policy Institute Director of Research Josh Bivens "We think that if the federal government fails to address the coming state and local government shortfalls, it will guarantee a prolonged recession and several years of excess unemployment... We have noted estimates of the state and local shortfalls between now and the end of 2021 hover around $1 Trillion, and if we do nothing to close that gap, we'll end 2021 with roughly 5 million fewer jobs in the US economy than we otherwise would have had."

These are the numbers at the height of the COVID-19 wave.

SECTION 4:
Systemic U.S. racism and COVID-19

Yellow-caking an epidemic: New York Times spreads the virus of hatred, again

The Chinese "fight for mankind" against Coronavirus

By K.J. Noh
March 5, 2020, Monthly Review Online

In the end, the plague touched us all...it was not confined..., breeding in a compost of greed and uselessness and murder... and delivering death... [serving] as furnished rooms for ideology.
— Peter Hamill, Liner notes to Blood on the Tracks

THE 2019 NOVEL Coronavirus, COVID 19, first detected late last year in the hub city of Wuhan, China, is a rapidly-spreading viral disease, often characterized by a cluster of acute respiratory symptoms. To date, over 85,000 people have been infected, and nearly 3,000—and counting—have died.

The virulence of this outbreak has put most of China under different degrees of lockdown: over 50 million people were quarantined in the immediate region; the majority of neighboring Chinese cities implemented restrictions on travel and movement to stem the tide of infection; and across the country, all of China has been facing restrictions and hardship. As we speak, the disease has spread to every continent except Antarctica, and is recorded over 50 countries across the world, with serious outbreaks in Korea, Japan, Italy, Iran, and possibly undetected clusters across the world. In the face of this sudden and tragic crisis—and the extraordinarily responsible and responsive measures the Chinese government has taken to safeguard public health and prevent its spreading outside its epicenter and regional/national borders—buying the world time to respond—the western media has made a highly political choice on how to report about it.

Instead of voicing support or encouraging solidarity—"We are Wuhan"—and commending the extraordinary efforts and sacrifices the Chinese have taken to fight a disease that, in the words of epidemiologist Zhong Nanshan, "all of mankind is facing," western corporate media have chosen to go all out to criticize and demonize China, sparing no effort to rekindle ugly, racist, orientalist, and dehumanizing tropes, using any perceived or imagined misstep, pretext, and shortcoming to tar China and the Chinese. Arguments for economic decoupling, predictions of political collapse, efforts at global delegitimation, as well as general racist fearmongering are pandemic.

One crackpot narrative, peddled at the highest levels of U.S. government, is that this is deliberate Chinese bioweapon. Another narrative, no less toxic and virulent, alleges that the Chinese leadership, suppressed free speech and silenced the flow of information, thus creating needlessly a preventable epidemic. The Chinese government, "out of a "fear of political embarrassment," "allow[ed] the virus to gain a tenacious hold," thus "creating the conditions for a lethal epidemic" that has led to the deaths of thousands and the infection of countless more.

The New York Times ("NYTimes" hereafter) takes the (yellow) cake for sowing this toxic, racist disinformation, alleging in numerous articles and opinion pieces of a "cover-up" at "critical moments." They claim that "China's old habits put secrecy and order ahead of openly confronting the crisis"; that China "played down dangers to the public, leaving the city's 11 million residents unaware that they should protect themselves"; and the NYTimes presents this as dispositive proof that the Chinese system is fatally flawed. All this while reveling in and boosting on its website an unseemly schadenfreude that suppression of information and free speech has led to condign and expected catastrophe.

One key element of this disinformation/delegitimation campaign concerns the tragic passing away of a Dr. Li Wenliang. Dr. Li spoke of the disease at an early moment in the outbreak (12/30/2019) to a group of colleagues. He was later reprimanded by the police for "spreading rumors." After going back to work, he himself contracted the virus, and despite being young and seemingly healthy, he tragically passed away. Latching onto

this unexpected fatality like a deadly virus itself, the NYTimes grafted onto his death, the "authoritarian suppression of the truth" meme: that Dr. Li was a valiant, dissenting whistleblower who had "tried to sound a warning that a troubling cluster of... infections...could grow out of control," thus exploiting tragedy to concoct and circulate a political myth: Dr. Li had tried to warn the public early on about the virus, but had been brutally silenced and suppressed.

In particular, the NYTimes claims that Dr Li was arrested by the government, "in the middle of the night," no less; and suggests in multiple articles that had he not been silenced, countless lives would have been saved, and countless infections prevented. In other words, the Chinese communists, because of their obsession with political appearances, their mendacious secrecy, and totalitarian control, instigated a cover-up that has had nightmarish consequences for global health.

This disclosure would be truly extraordinary, heroic, award-meriting journalism. Except for one small problem: none of the assertions are supported by the facts, and none of the conclusions withstand the slightest scrutiny.

In order to peddle this toxic canard, the NYTimes has had to yellow-cake up a foul brew of innuendo, half-truths, misrepresentations, outright lies, spiked fiercely with stereotypes, racial hatred, and red-baiting, while torturing the English language, eliding logic, ignoring science, and shredding the credibility of the fourth estate— yet again, as it did with its gutter journalism justifying the 2003 Iraq War.

These are the facts.

1. Not a whistle blower

The NYTimes suggests that Dr Li was a whistle blower, "sounding a warning." But Dr. Li was not a whistle blower by any usual definition of the word. He did not notify the Chinese CDC or any public health organ. He did not notify the hospital authorities. He did not warn the public of wrongdoing, danger, or a cover-up. What he did do is share information with seven school colleagues on December 30th, 2019 over a private messaging

group. (He also shared a photo of a confidential medical record). How that constitutes "whistle blowing" is not explained by the NYTimes.

2. Fraudulent Timeline

The NYTimes claims that the sanctioning and silencing led to suppression of timely and important information—a cover-up of a dangerous but necessary truth. This assertion is not borne out by the facts, including the actual timeline of disclosures. The "whistle"— if we can call it that—had already been blown. For example, Dr. Zhang Jixian, the director of respiratory and critical care medicine at Hubei Provincial Hospital, had officially notified the hospital on December 27th, 2019 of an unusual cluster of viral cases, and the hospital had notified the city's disease control center. After further consultation, the regional CDC was notified on the 28th. By the 29th full scale research and field investigations had been started and isolation measures had been imposed. The government was already actively investigating and doing their due diligence with other cases long before the NYTimes allegations (constructed, as always, from anonymous sources). Zhang herself, contrary to the "suppression and punishment" narrative, was recognized and commended by the government.

3. Wrong Claim

Dr. Li had asserted — without any proof and in error — that it was SARS, a related, but different coronavirus. In fact, it was not SARS. Why is this important? Because the 2003 SARS epidemic caused widespread panic; authorities were clearly concerned that this incorrect information might feed another panic event. The NYTimes tries to massage this narrative by asserting he had said it was a "SARS-like" disease, although the record clearly shows that he asserted it was "SARS". This misreporting tries to blunt the error and make Dr. Li seem more prescient or authoritative than he was.

4. No Evidence

Some might ask: Well, what's in a name? Whether it was SARS, "a SARS-like" disease, or no SARS, it was still dangerous. So why was the claim suppressed?

In claiming there was some sort of cover-up, the NYTimes suggests that the authorities recognized and understood that the disease was dangerous but covered it up anyway. This is far from the truth at the time: there was little clear evidence that this was a dangerous or severe epidemic at the time of the outbreak. More specifically:

There was no clear evidence of human-to-human transmission at that time (see the Appendix 1. Partial Timeline of Outbreak and Responses). The first case happened two weeks later, on January 14, 2020. There had been no fatalities (the first fatality was January 9, 2020—ten days later), and there were only a handful of cases. Even later, as more casualties started to appear, most of the casualties were older people with serious existing pathology or co-morbidity.

In other words, it was unclear how serious this was or whether serious actions should be taken: commonsense tells us in winter, colds, flu and pneumonia are not uncommon; discerning a novel, serious outbreak is not a simple task. The mere fact that the Chinese authorities were able to identify and take action so rapidly— despite its resemblance to existing coronaviruses— indicates how competent, alert, and conscientious many of them were.

5. No Expertise or Qualification

The NYTimes claims the "doctor tried to sound a warning," but it is important to note that there was little reason to sound the alarm over Dr. Li's warning. He was not an infectious disease specialist, nor was he treating any suspected patients. Dr. Li was an ophthalmologist (not an epidemiologist, virologist, infectious disease specialist, internist, ICU specialist, or even a GP or X-ray/CT technician). Further, there is no evidence that he was privy to any specialized insider information that was being "covered up." Before Dr. Li even issued his warning the hospital

was already taking all known precautions—including isolation—with suspected patients.

6. Not arrested

Dr. Li was not arrested, as the NYTimes reported. The Times uses the word "summoned" interchangeably with the term "arrested", apparently to heighten the dramatic sense of injustice. The doctor was called in, lightly reprimanded (talked to, and signed a document not to spread incorrect information) and then went straight back to work. This begs the question: if a non-specialist (for example, a podiatrist) at a large general hospital in the U.S. claimed that there was an outbreak of infectious disease (for example, bubonic plague)—and privately shared HIPAA-protected documents (as Dr. Li did)—is it conceivable they would have escaped some sort of official sanction?

7. Understandable Reasons for Acting Methodically

The government had reasonable and defensible reasons to act prudently and methodically at the time. While the jury is still out and the timeline bears more elaboration, there is still little evidence that this was a deliberate attempt to "stifle criticism" and "silence" to avoid "embarrassment." Based on the available evidence, we can reasonably surmise that: The authorities didn't know how serious this was at the time—a reasonable assumption given the known evidence at the time. The "nocebo" effect (negative placebo) is real— people can take any ambiguous symptoms (that are always present in the body) and think they are sick. This attribution can induce measurable negative effects in the body. Panicked, mass hysterical responses are not uncommon, and can constitute a public health hazard on their own. Either of these effects, caused by premature or careless disclosure could have resulted in: People erroneously believing they are sick. Overcrowding at hospitals, stretching resources and preventing genuinely sick people from being seen or getting care, while spreading the infection faster through contact (all at a time when public services are winding down). Mass exodus away from the center, spreading the infection outside of Wuhan

much faster. Hoarding and scarcity of masks and other supplies, vigilante quarantines, and other hysterical, dangerous, and unproductive behavior.

It's also essential to note also that this was the period of the Spring Festival, the busiest and most important holiday of the year. While it is easy to criticize the cautious, tentative responses in hindsight, it is understandable that authorities sought to avoid immediate and extreme measures in the moment.

8. Upfront Transparency

The NYTimes alleges "cover-up" and "secrecy." However, the Wuhan authorities publicized that the doctor had been sanctioned. In this way, they actually spread information about his "whistleblowing" and the fact of the disease symptoms. As a matter of fact, they have publicized all the people sanctioned for similar actions. This would seem to indicate that, at the time:

they genuinely believed they were taking correct actions—actions that would be justifiable and vindicated—and they did not know that this disease was as serious as it turned out to be (and it's not clear how could they have known); it is unlikely they were trying to hide or cover-up anything. If they had been trying to silence or cover-up something, this incident would most likely have gone unannounced.

9. Not Ahead of the Government

The NYTimes claims that Dr. Li sounded an alarm in a context where the "initial handling" by the government was slow, negligent, or reluctant. The facts belie this assertion.

Dr. Li was not ahead of the government. As we noted above regarding the timeline, the government (Wuhan disease authorities) had already been informed at least 3 days prior, and they delivered their own internal and public warnings the same day as Dr Li's sharing with his friends. There is little evidence to show that this was "forced" or "compelled" by the ophthalmologist's message (as the NYTimes has claimed).

In fact, as is usually the case with public announcements,

the health department had likely been discussing, drafting, and planning their statement prior to release on that day.

Note, also that this information was released before Dr. Li was called to the police for reprimand on 1/03 (in other words, accurate information had already been put out, and the reprimand can be interpreted as a critique of the speculation, as well as the how, why, and who of sharing than an attempt at erasure). Whether the reprimand was judiciously or skillfully delivered is another matter, but the facts remain that no cover-up can be asserted from this incident.

10. "Yellow-Caking" the Experts, Again.

The NYTimes implies that the Chinese government knew the outbreak was serious, but covered it up and delayed notification anyway to avoid political embarrassment. But again, the facts refute the assertion: The WHO was also notified on December 31st, 2019 (the following day) of an "unknown virus" but did not consider it serious. The WHO did not suggest any quarantine or extreme public health measures. On January 5th, 2020, they advised against a travel restriction. Some 10 days later, they again indicated there was no human-to-human transmission. On January 23rd, they indicated it was not a public health emergency. Only on January 30th did they declare an emergency—fully 30 days after the so-called NYTimes-imputed "whistleblowing."

11. Communist Catastrophe, really?

The NYTimes, in particular, along with its ideological cousin, the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), has been avidly red-baiting, pumping up the narrative of "whistleblower-cover-up" and "weak governance" endemic to "authoritarian-dictatorships-that-create-catastrophes-like-Chernobyl" trope. "Undemocratic Governance is dangerous for your health" claim the ideologues at the CFR. But freedom-loving capitalist America easily outclasses and outdoes any modern socialist state in its negligence and damage to public health and wellbeing. A comparable event is the 2009 H1N1 A "San Diego" virus. It took the U.S. nearly six months to declare an emergency and

take meaningful active measures. Because of U.S. government inaction and lack of containment, between 150k-575K people died all over the world. Eighty percent were under 65 years old. Last year's flu is suspected to have caused 61,000 deaths in the U.S. This year's flu is estimated to have caused 16,000 deaths since October, including 1,400 dying in a single week. Oh,, and let's not forget the AIDS crisis. The opiate crisis. The lead crises. The homelessness crisis. The list is endless, repetitious, and atrocious.

12. New Standards in Crisis Response

Contrary to NYTimes' claims of incompetence, "weakness," and slowness, the Chinese have been setting new, groundbreaking standards and practices in outbreak detection and response. Examination of the facts shows that the Chinese were actually highly vigilant, agile, well prepared and well-coordinated in their response—this has been acknowledged and commended by the WHO, and other public health agencies and experts of repute. They had a centralized database and control tower, which is why they were able to react so quickly to isolate, identify, sequence, and take public action. They built two fully-functioning, state-of-the-art isolation hospitals in a matter of days, and dispatched a dedicated army of 40,000 medical professionals who have worked tirelessly to heal the afflicted. They implemented large-scale treatment, quarantine, and social distancing measures; took unprecedented steps in risk communication and community engagement; put into practice systemic detection and contact tracing practices; organized mass logistical coordination and supply; implemented price controls; put a moratorium on all debt and rent impacted by the outbreak, and recessed/damped down their economy to prevent/minimize loss of life. In addition, all patients and suspected patients are screened, tested, and treated free of charge. These are responses to an outbreak on a level and scale that have never been seen before, and they have been widely lauded by professionals as having changed the direction of the COVID-19 outbreak.

13. Monday Morning Schadenfreude

The NYTimes has been willfully ignoring all of that is positive: vigilance that detected the disease early; skilled, coordinated mobilization; technical and medical tour de force; mass acts of solidarity, generosity, and kindness across the country; and valiant, extraordinary medical and medical worker competence and heroism. Instead the Monday-morning epidemiological quarterbacking of the NYTimes (and derivative media) has been savage, vicious, and odious in exploiting every perceived mishap as a pretext to pile on and attack the Chinese people and the Chinese system while fanning discord and criticism. For example, the February 1, 2020 NYTimes article insinuates "cover-up," and "systemic weakness" (but it has to ignore the specific timeline [see Appendix 1 below] in order to make up its case).

Nicholas Kristof is especially toxic in his offensive, red-baiting misrepresentation: Xi used his tight rule to control information rather than to stop an epidemic.... China makes poor decisions because it squelches independent voices...[it listens only to] flattery and optimism. Xi is a preening dictator, some citizens are paying a price.

In times of crisis, for western nations, the normal response is "We are Paris, NY, etc." When it comes to China, the measured response is: "You brought this on yourselves—you deserve this because of your dirtiness, immorality, and bat-eating communist dictatorship"; "You would rather control your citizens than save lives." This is often followed up by some variant of "nuke China."

We also see direct acts of hate against Chinese and Asians: Chinese viciously insulted, shunned, or assaulted all across the world.

Kristof and his ideological teammates can be isolated here, patients zero with their null set of facts, turning up the dials to 10 in this toxic wind tunnel of Sinophobia and hate speech.

14. Bashing China on "Free Speech"

Running lapdog-parallel to Kristof, taking the baton/bone from the NYTimes, The Guardian opines, "if China valued free speech, there would be no coronavirus." This is the offensive, viral meme fabricated, cultured, and replicated from the death of Dr. Li by the NYTimes. It has become the standard trope of the outbreak in the media, the blogosphere. Of course, even cursory critical reflection might lead one to consider—in the capital of "Free Speech"—lead poisoning in Flint Michigan, the AIDS crisis, the aforementioned A H1N1 pandemic, mass shootings, not to mention Global Warming. It also bears emphasizing that the HK rioters—and their media backers—have an unbeatable track record of opposing any "Free Speech" that doesn't agree with theirs, by burning, beating, lynching, threatening, and doxxing everyone who disagrees with them.

Of course, fetishized "free speech" is not a panacea to all political or social ills. Certainly in a public health crisis, unbridled "free speech" which is factually incorrect or misguided is hardly beneficial (cf. "yelling fire in a crowded theater"). The WHO has pointed this out by warning that the outbreak has been accompanied by an "infodemic" and highlighting the need for accurate risk communication.

Underlying this fetishized concept of "free speech" as the solution to all woes, is the liberal/anarcho-capitalist conceit that "in the marketplace of ideas" the correct one will naturally emerge to benefit all. Of course, history has shown, time and time again, that this is hardly the case. The "free speech" of the "anti-vax" movement is a case in point: it increases the chances that the U.S. will be subject to a deadly pandemic. Various local and international epidemics, as well as the deadly U.S. (San Diego) H1N1 A Pandemic of 2009 signal to us this potential risk.

Another point of comparison: 11,435 people died in the first 2 weeks of August 2003 in the free-speech epicenter of Europe, Ile-de-France/France. This was from heatstroke, dehydration and their sequelae—all easily preventable and predictable deaths which happened under a government with a commitment to public health.

French capitalism/governance was not raked through the coals for this, nor considered to have lost fundamental legitimacy because of this tragedy—nor charged with covering it up or under-reporting (although they did)—although to prevent these deaths required no special treatments, hospitals, protective equipment, medicine, research, or technology. It just required, some extra water, some common sense, and perhaps a few public shelters. And political will and care. Can you say "politique de deux poids, deux mesures" (political double standard)?

15. Amateurism Trumps Experts

In order to bolster their trumped-up case, the NYTimes, along with others like CFR and Foreign Policy magazine, has trolled out a shadowy truck-load of ideological scientific amateurs ("global health fellows", "science reporters") to bolster and backstop their case. Of course, it is convenient to overlook the fact that epidemiology is a complex science—and that predicting the course, virulence, and lethality of an outbreak is not unlike predicting the strength, path, and effects of a hurricane. Trotting out ill-informed amateurs, generalists, and ideologues from the NYTimes or the CFR to troll the epidemiologists and the WHO is like getting amateur bloggers to attack atmospheric scientists over global warming.

16. Was the Chinese response fast enough?

There is a perpetual insinuation by the NYTimes and its ideological allies that hide-bound, "authoritarian" bureaucracies cannot respond appropriately, quickly, or effectively to such outbreaks: "Weak, undemocratic governance is dangerous for your health," intones the self-righteous CFR.

This question really begs others: fast relative to what? China achieved some of the fastest institutional responses ever in modern epidemiological history.

Appropriate relative to what? This was the period of the Spring Festival, with the largest mass migration in history (billions

of trips taken) with all the conflicting demands, uncertainties and strains such an event entails.

Effective relative to what? Modern responses under the neoliberal capitalist order (MERS, Ebola, A H1N1) have been an endless catalog of global catastrophes.

In the meantime, China seems to be moving towards containment of the disease (although it's still too early speak definitively), while the virus seems to be spreading liberally throughout the rest of the world, oblivious to the "democratic" or "non-democratic" governance of the state. The responses across a cross-section of the 50+ countries, where the outbreak has now spread, constitute an instructive comparative study. Despite clear and transparent information about the disease from China—modelling strong measures to prevent transmission across national borders; clear, field-tested detection, prevention, and isolation protocols/ practices—almost all the other country's responses have been marked by serious, and potentially disastrous, errors. For example, 443 passengers were allowed to disembark from the Diamond Princess by the Japanese government on February 19th, despite very poor preventive and isolation measures from the infected. South Korea has seen an explosion of cases; despite previous experience with SARS and MERS its military is infected. Iran and Italy are facing serious pandemic risk, and many other countries, including the U.S. have seen "inexplicable" community transmission. To date, none of these other countries have been raked over the coals like the Chinese—accused of political and cultural practices that promote disease or that their political system is fundamentally illegitimate because of these errors. Nor has the media acknowledged or appreciated the extraordinary sacrifices and efforts the Chinese have taken to contain the outbreak, which has bought the rest of world time to prepare: it's not an exaggeration to say the Chinese have fallen on the epidemiological grenade for the benefit of the rest of the world. Their sense of duty to humanity is summarized in the words of one medical professional: "It's our responsibility to do this for the world." The message here is plain: no matter what they do and how much they sacrifice, China is systemically delegitimated; when imperial-capitalist countries

botch a response, kid gloves are put on and pockets are turned out so excuses can be found.

When the investigations are completed and the history finally written—and the Chinese government is ruthlessly investigating itself—the record may conclude that these were the best possible actions (see Appendix 2. Measures Taken by the City of Hefei, below) of an alert, organized, conscientious government, trying to do the best under difficult, almost impossible circumstances. Few other countries could have responded with the same level of vigor, organization, mobilization, and care for the wellbeing of its citizens and the world. Were the responses perfect? Of course not. Were there gaps and lapsus? Absolutely, yes. Was there over-and-under reaction? Yes. Did the central and local governments work hand-in-glove perfectly? No. Was there discontent expressed on Weibo and other public fora? Most certainly. Yet, given the extraordinary complexities and challenges of responding to the outbreak— its timing, its conflicting priorities, the size of the population, its stresses, strains and demands— we can be sure that this response will be written up in the Public Health textbooks. When the final judgement call is made—relative to responses by states in similar situations—it will be largely favorable to the Chinese government: bloviating ideologues, orientalists, and racists be damned.

*Omitted illustrations, graphs, appendices, footnotes can be found online where this article originally appeared. See Sources of articles at the end of the book for web addresses.

Im/migrants and COVID-19: Free them all now!

By Teresa Gutierrez
March 25, 2020, Workers World

WHEN THE DEMANDS of the progressive and revolutionary movements concur with the demands of those deep within the mainstream of the system, you know things are changing. Who would have thought a few months ago that prosecutors, judges, district attorneys and doctors would be echoing the same demands of activists and families of the incarcerated? But that is exactly what is happening.

Well, almost.

On March 23, a joint statement from elected prosecutors dealing with the COVID-19 crisis and people in custody pointed out what many activists had already said: COVID-19 will hit particularly hard those behind the walls.

The statement read: "There are 2.3 million adults and children locked up in the U.S. in various systems of confinement, including state and federal prisons, local jails, youth correctional facilities, and immigration detention centers. Far more cycle in and out of jail on a daily basis; there are 10.6 million jail admissions every year."

The judicial system, thoroughly racist, particularly targets Black and Brown people as well as those who do not have documents to be in the U.S.

Indeed, capital can cross any border it wants, but a farmworker cannot!

At the beginning of the health care pandemic, immigrant and prison abolitionist activists immediately pointed out that conditions in prisons and detention centers were ripe for the coronavirus to take hold and spread. In fact, the hated Trump administration is facing growing calls to not only free the detained but to close all immigration courts.

According to NPR, "Immigration and Customs Enforcement reported for the first time this week that one of its workers has the virus that causes COVID-19." (March 21)

In one prison in Massachusetts this led detained migrants to go on a heroic hunger strike.

NPR reports that more than 3,000 physicians signed a letter urging ICE to release detainees. One of those, Ranit Mishori said, "The window of opportunity is rapidly, rapidly closing because I think we need to let them out before they become sick." (March 21)

Detention: a death sentence

Migrants in detention are fleeing unprecedented catastrophic conditions back home. These conditions were created by U.S. imperialism: climate change and economic and foreign policies that benefit Wall Street and the Pentagon are what force workers to flee. As migrant activists have said, "We are here because you were there."

Nearly half of the immigrants detained by ICE have been accused of no crime other than civil immigration violations, and many might not have been held under previous administrations.

The statements from elected prosecutors and physicians called for the immediate release of some of the prisoners in order to prevent a "catastrophe."

And that is where activists and mainstream officials depart.

Activists are demanding free them all and free them now!

Who can trust the justice system under this sick system to determine who should be released and who should stay? The only fair answer is to free them all now, not just people determined to be "safer" – as prosecutors are saying.

To not do that today is imposing yet another fascistlike sentence on those behind bars: "Get sick from COVID-19 and possibly die; the government doesn't give a damn."

Conditions for prisoners before COVID-19 were already deplorable. Basic items like soap or items for good hygiene are hard to come by. Medical services mirror conditions of the 1800s.

For migrants it is the same — with the exception that they are far from their homeland, to boot.

Just like in regular prison, detained migrants have died while in custody, many of them children who die from easily preventable diseases such as the common flu.

Despite the fact that today fewer people are apprehended at the border, the American Civil Liberties Union points out that immigration detention has reached record proportions.

Fascist Trump seizes the moment

As the COVID-19 crisis develops, fascist elements in Washington are using the crisis to tighten control over society.

With regards to immigration, Trump used COVID-19 to close the border. (New York Times, March 20) No longer would migrants without documents who could easily fulfill the requirements for amnesty be allowed to come in. They would no longer be taken into detention, but would immediately be sent home or would be forced to stay in Mexico.

Terrifyingly, unaccompanied children will be exempt from that and will be taken and sent to detention. We must sadly ask: Will they ever be seen or heard from again?

Since the beginning of his presidency, Trump had wanted to do all this, but the courts had blocked him in order to respect the right of due process. That right is no longer being respected.

COVID-19 has not only exposed the weaknesses of a capitalist for-profit health care system. It exposes the weaknesses of capitalism itself.

What must be done for migrants and all those detained? We must be clear: No matter what "crime" was committed by those incarcerated — if one was committed at all — it is substantially more criminal to willingly let detained human beings get sick.

Social distancing was the first line of defense for the masses. Opening up the detention centers and prisons is now the first line of defense for those detained.

Free them all now!

COVID-19: The Capitalist Emperor Has no Clothes

By Ajamu Baraka
April 1, 2020, Black Agenda Report

THE SYSTEMIC FAILURE of the capitalist order triggered by the coronavirus has reinforced the growing awareness that extreme wealth inequality is a fundamental characteristic of the system.

"Billions of dollars were allocated to business while millions of people are facing an increasingly desperate situation."

As the capitalist emperor strolls down the avenue of U.S. public opinion butt-naked but for the first time since the 1930s, more and more people are starting to realize that they were not crazy. The brutal failures of the capitalist system that they saw were not a figment of their imagination or a diversion from their own personal failures. Instead, they were the awful reality of degradation, dehumanization and social insecurity embedded in the system. Many could see that reality but wouldn't allow themselves to believe their own eyes and experiences. They couldn't call it out like the kid in the fable – until now.

The claim that the U.S. was an exceptional nation and that the capitalist order represented the highest expression of human development has been shattered by the second global collapse of the capitalist order within twelve years. Millions thrown out of work, global supply chains disrupted, trillions disappeared in the capitalist casino euphemistically called the stock market... The state's feeble and class biased response to COVID-19 has resulted in a costly lesson in class politics for the U.S. public.

The dictatorship of the capitalist class has survived because the class reality of the dictatorship has been obscured. Limited democracy, social democracy, white nationalism in the form of patriotism, the corruption of unions, the post-war compromise

between capital and labor, state subsidies for the expansion of the white middle-class, debt-driven consumption and cross-class white suppression of the democratic and human rights of African Americans provided the material and ideological basis for the perpetuation of the dictatorship throughout most of the 20th century and into the 21st.

"The claim that the U.S. was an exceptional nation has been shattered by the second global collapse of the capitalist order within twelve years."

However, the systemic failure of the capitalist order triggered by the coronavirus has reinforced the growing awareness among the population that extreme wealth inequality is not just a temporary quirk that can be remedied with tax and some redistributive policies but a fundamental characteristic of the system.

For example, the debate that took place leading up to the passing of the legislation by Congress to address COVID-19's impact dramatically exposed a capitalist class agenda that was objectively opposed to the interest of the entire working class, the poor, and the declining middle-class.

The people saw that billions of dollars were allocated to business while millions of people are facing an increasingly desperate situation. They are facing their second pay period without a full check and they are weeks away from receiving any kind of meaningful relief. But the peoples' bills continue to mount up while the multinational corporations get bailed out. April rent and mortgage payments are due and with everyone home and eating more but with less money for food, thousands are being forced to go without or rely on food pantries. The $1,200 payoff is an insult.

And with the tragic reality of the shamefully inadequate public healthcare system in the U.S. and the rumors that private insurance healthcare premiums might increase 40% next year, the capitalists want to shut down any discussion around Medicare for All along with any discussion on nationalizing the healthcare industry.

"The $1,200 payoff is an insult."

While millions are losing their employer-based healthcare coverage, Biden says that nothing has changed his opposition to Medicare for All. Another neoliberal Democrat. This is not being missed by many people.

The demystification of capitalism and a realistic understanding of the role of the U.S. in the global order is a good thing and that will be the silver lining coming out of this current crisis.

The precipitous decline of U.S. power and prestige is visible for all to see. The world sees that it is the Chinese who are sending ventilators to Europe. The world also sees that several states and U.S. federal agencies like FEMA are being forced to buy ventilators and face masks from China.

The world also recognizes that the U.S. lost its wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, despite its enormous war machine and the failed attempt to effect regime change in Syria.

The public outside of the U.S. know that there is absolutely nothing exceptional about this nation, except for its inability, up until now, to see itself the way that millions see it – as a declining power that is morally corrupt and a danger to itself and the world.

"The world sees that it is the Chinese who are sending ventilators to Europe."

The ability to see the emperor and all his nakedness and know they are seeing the truth, reflects the loss of what Danny Haiphong and Robert Sirvent call the ideology of "American exceptionalism and American innocence."

That shift in consciousness is occurring slowly and unevenly. But let there be no doubt what this change in consciousness will result in. It will not mean that the rulers will surrender power to the aroused masses without a fight. No, it only means that the subjective factor – a revolutionary consciousness – will catch up with the objective factor of the ongoing crisis of the Pan-European white supremacist colonial/capitalist patriarchy. These are the conditions for a revolutionary advance. That moment is on the horizon. Can you see it?

Ajamu Baraka is the national organizer of the Black Alliance

for Peace and was the 2016 candidate for vice president on the Green Party ticket. Baraka serves on the Executive Committee of the U.S. Peace Council and leadership body of the United National Anti-War Coalition (UNAC). He is an editor and contributing columnist for the Black Agenda Report and contributing columnist for Counterpunch. He was recently awarded the US Peace Memorial 2019 Peace Prize and the Serena Shirm award for uncompromised integrity in journalism.

Racism, COVID-19 and Black people

By Monica Moorehead
April 6, 2020, Workers World

APRIL 4 MARKS the 52nd anniversary of the assassination of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., the great civil rights leader, who sacrificed his life to realize a dream for social equality.

He was gunned down in cold blood when he went to Memphis, Tenn., in 1968 to support Black sanitation workers on strike for dignity, safe working conditions and a living wage. This important struggle epitomized the merging of two sides of the class struggle for economic and political rights.

In a letter to his spouse, Coretta Scott King, in 1952, Dr. King wrote, "I imagine you already know that I am much more socialistic in my economic theory than capitalistic... [Capitalism] started out with a noble and high motive ... but like most human systems it fell victim to the very thing it was revolting against. So today capitalism has out-lived its usefulness."

The last sentence of this quote is certainly just as relevant now as when it was written, especially considering the staggering crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on workers and oppressed peoples on a global scale.

The poorest are suffering

This global health care crisis has overtaken so many sectors of society in the rich, developed countries and the poor, developing countries. Even inside the United States, the most powerful imperialist country, there has been an uphill battle to secure enough testing kits, surgical masks, hand sanitizer, ventilators and other essential health care goods and services to make sure millions of people stay as healthy and as safe as possible in order to contain the spread of the virus. In this crisis, the most marginalized and the poorest of the poor are suffering in disproportionate numbers.

Capitalism — a system that puts profits before people's needs — is the root cause of the current crisis for millions in the U.S., but some have been suffering more than others for decades and for centuries — especially people of color. Their numbers include both those who identify as African American and also im/migrants from South and Central America, the Caribbean, Africa, Asia and the Middle East — all suffering now from an upsurge in xenophobia.

In New York state and New York City — the epicenter of the COVID-19 virus in the U.S. — one out of four people testing positive are living in the borough of the Bronx. Half of the deaths so far from the virus have also occurred there, primarily due to high numbers of people with pre-existing conditions like asthma and diabetes. (thecity.nyc, April 3).

The Bronx is the poorest of all the New York City boroughs and that is no accident. Of the overall population there, 35.64 percent are Black or African-American people, 48.38 percent are Latinx and 3.11 percent are Asian or Pacific Islander. And these numbers do not reflect undocumented people, with many families forced to live in close quarters with little or no access to public assistance. This is a population at severe risk and in need of adequate health care.

A pandemic within a pandemic

There is an old African American saying that goes, "When white folks catch a cold, Black folks get pneumonia." That statement could be taken figuratively and literally.

For African Americans, the pandemic health crisis has driven home the very hard reality that has existed for over two centuries, since the end of slavery: The U.S. has an antiquated health care system riddled with white supremacy.

Even before this current health crisis hit, African Americans have suffered the highest mortality rates from the cradle to the grave compared to white people. Alarming statistics from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) give an indication of this reality: 54 percent of Black males suffer from

high blood pressure and Black people suffer the highest death rate from heart attacks of all populations.

In the Deep South — the poorest U.S. region and home to the largest concentration of Black people — the states of Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina and Texas all spend less than $25 per person a year on public health, compared to $84 per person in New York. (Mother Jones, April 2).

According to the 2015 National Medical Association Scientific Assembly, the risk of diabetes was 77 percent higher among Black people than for white people. Depending on where they live, Black women were two and a half times more likely to die giving birth in 2018 compared with white women. (National Center for Health Statistics, Jan. 30)

In light of the general poor health Black people suffer from, along with lack of health care in their communities — both urban and rural — there exists today a pandemic within a pandemic. The toll of the coronavirus is becoming a genocidal-like crisis within Black communities.

Double, triple death rates in Black communities

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services reported on April 2 that of the 11,000 confirmed cases in the state, 35 percent were Black people and 25 percent were white. The state's death toll from the coronavirus was 40 percent Black people, 26 percent white and 30 percent unknown.

But Black people make up just 12 percent of the state's population! A quarter of the deaths alone in Michigan have occurred in Detroit, which is 80 percent Black.

In Milwaukee, Wisc., where Black life expectancy is 14 years shorter than that of whites, half of Milwaukee County's 945 virus cases and 81 percent of its 27 deaths are Black people. The overall African-American state population is 26 percent.

Dr. Camara Jones, a family physician and epidemiologist at Harvard University, who spent 13 years at the CDC identifying, measuring and addressing racial bias within the medical system, stated: "COVID is just unmasking the deep disinvestment in our

communities, the historical injustices and the impact of residential segregation. This is the time to name racism as the cause of all of those things. The overrepresentation of people of color in poverty and white people in wealth is not just a happenstance. ... It's because we're not valued." (propublica.org, April 3).

According to Dr. Ngozi Ezike, the director of the Illinois Department of Public Health, Black people make up 30 percent of all coronavirus cases reported in the state — more than double the state's Black population of 14.6 percent. Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker commented on these numbers in the area of health care: "It's hard to make up for decades — frankly maybe centuries — of inequality." (CNN, April 5).

Workers World Party's socialist demand of "Free health care for all" raises an answer to the massive, life-threatening situation for all workers and their families. "Black Lives Matter" should also be a main focus of this overall demand, and affirmative action must be implemented in health care to help unmask and remedy this horrific injustice.

Migrants in detention in Texas face COVID-19

By Mirinda Crissman
April 7, 2020, Workers World Austin

MIGRANTS BEING HELD in detention in Texas have been facing abhorrent sanitary conditions in the detention facilities long before the coronavirus pandemic began. Now that the virus is here, and threatens to infect such a vulnerable and captive population at higher rates than the general population, many migrants in detention in Texas have begun to resist. Officials in charge of these facilities are more afraid of protest spreading than they are of the deadly virus.

On Feb. 24, "a group of [more than 40] Cameroonian women held by Immigration and Customs Enforcement at the T. Don Hutto Residential Facility, a women's center in Texas run by private prison company CoreCivic, staged a sit-in in front of the facility's clinic to protest their prolonged detention and lack of medical care." Since the sit-in, more than 160 Cameroonian women have been scattered and transferred to other facilities across the state. (The Intercept, March 30).

Migrants in various South Texas detention centers have been denied parole as a result of a new federal "transit bar" policy, which says migrants cannot access asylum if they did not first try to seek it in any of the countries they passed through on their way to the U.S.

This "transit bar" forces many affected to seek lesser forms of protection. It has led to the logic that since they are no longer asylum seekers, the migrants are not eligible for humanitarian release in the face of a crisis. Immigration lawyers have argued that these blanket denials of parole are illegal, but the courts are moving too slowly to protect migrants in grave danger.

On March 20, about 60 detainees at an ICE South Texas Processing Center in Pearsall took part in a work strike. Many of the striking detainees work as janitors or cafeteria personnel.

They cited overcrowding, lack of sanitation equipment and fear of infection — in a system that does not screen anyone coming into the facility for the virus — as the catalyst for protest.

Staff ordered the strikers to return to their beds. When they refused, nine protesters were pepper sprayed. ICE officials denied that the strike took place at first, but later confirmed a disturbance. (Texas Tribune, March 25)

Many migrants have begun trying to opt for voluntary deportation to escape crisis conditions that were already abysmal under the Obama administration. It is a death sentence to keep them caged, whether in detention facilities or in packed migrant camps along borders.

The physical facilities had already been highly criticized for overcrowding, lack of sanitary conditions, sexual misconduct, and other abuses of power coming from staff. These conditions, in the time of global pandemic, are setting the stage for mass killings.

Clearly, stopping the spread of uprisings is a higher priority to those in power than it is to stop the spread of the coronavirus among a large population the United States has deemed a racial other. These brave migrants, who have begun to fight back, already recognize the power they possess by acting in unison. We must tear down the walls and free them all.

Verbal Harassment, Shunning and Physical Assaults

Cynthia Choi and Manjusha P. Kulkarni
May 20, 2020, Chinese for Affirmative Action (CAA)

SINCE ITS official launch on March 19, 2020, the STOP AAPI HATE reporting center has received over 1700 reports of coronavirus discrimination from Asian Americans across the country. The reporting center was founded by the Asian Pacific Policy and Planning Council (A3PCON), Chinese for Affirmative Action (CAA) and San Francisco State University's Asian American Studies Department.

The following patterns emerged over the course of six weeks: STOP AAPI HATE received 1710 incident reports. Nine out of ten respondents believed that they were targeted because of their race. Thirty-seven percent of incidents took place at public venues, including streets, parks and transit. Reports came from 45 states across the nation and Washington DC.

We encourage individuals who have experienced hate as a result of COVID-19 to continue to report at www.a3pcon.org/stopaapihate. The incident report form is available in twelve languages, including English, Simplified and Traditional Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese and Khmer, Hmong, Hindi, Punjabi, Thai and Tagalog. The lead organizations are working with public, private and other community-based organizations to provide resources for impacted individuals and to advocate for policies and programs dedicated to curtailing racial profiling.

The following incidents were emblematic of the over 1700 reported to Stop AAPI Hate: Professor sent an email to all of his students in the English class and called the COVID-19 the "Wuhan virus." We were holding a public webinar in Chinese on COVID-19 and families. In the last minutes, we were zoom-bombed by a group and participants were exposed to racist and vulgar images, curses, harassment and name-calling. A couple walked by our street with a white dog in tow and the male took out a marker and tagged my parents' car with the word COVID-19 on the driver side door. I was walking my dog at night and a car swerved toward me on the sidewalk, two guys started shouting, "Trump 2020, Die C---K Die!"

White man in his 50s, approximately 6 feet tall, dragged an elderly Asian man out of the store by the arm and proceeded to shove him outside the store, causing the elderly man to fall on his head and back. Victim was a 92-year old Asian man.

"The steady pace of incidents of anti-AAPI hate being reported from across the country, unfortunately, tracks with the recent IPSOS poll which found that 30% of all Americans witnessed someone blaming Asian Americans for COVID-19 and 60% of Asian Americans witnessed this behavior," said Manjusha Kulkarni, executive director of Asian Pacific Policy and Planning Council (A3PCON). "This scapegoating of AAPIs is leading to harassment, civil rights violations and in some cases, acts of physical violence against our communities."

"What concerns me is the open hostility and animus that our community is encountering and with concerted efforts to blame China and the Chinese government, Asian Americans will be subjected to more hate," states Cynthia Choi, Co-Executive Director of Chinese for Affirmative Action (CAA). "This new wave of racism is reminder of our conditional status and the need to challenge racism and inequality that has been exposed as a result of this pandemic."

Russell Jeung, Ph.D., chair and professor of Asian American Studies at San Francisco State University, added, "The incidents reflect a disturbing trend, that Americans are blaming Asian Americans for a biological virus. Instead, we need to hold our American government accountable to controlling the disease and to safeguarding our public health. Both the virus and racism are dangerous threats to the Asian American community."

The Asian Pacific Policy and Planning Council (A3PCON) is a coalition of more than forty community-based organizations that serve and represent the 1.5 million Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in the greater Los Angeles area, with a particular focus on low-income, immigrant, refugee and other vulnerable populations.

Chinese for Affirmative Action was founded in 1969 to protect the civil and political rights of Chinese Americans and to advance multiracial democracy in the United States. Today, CAA is a progressive voice in and on behalf of the broader Asian American and Pacific Islander community. We advocate for systemic change that protects immigrant rights, promotes language diversity, and remedies racial and social injustice.

Not a riot – REBELLION!

By Monica Moorehead
June 2, 2020, Workers World

JUNE 1 — A militant, youth-led uprising, ignited by police terror, has swept across the United States like wildfire, and is now entering its second week. Even Trump's proudly declaring himself the "law-and-order" president by threatening the presence of federal troops in many cities — and the present catastrophic COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in over 102,000 U.S. deaths and rising — have not been able to contain this uprising sparked by a horrific videotaped police murder exposed on May 25 for the whole world to see.

For almost nine minutes, George Floyd, a 46-year-old Black man, was tortured and then lynched by Minneapolis police as he lay face-down and handcuffed in the street. One police officer pressed his knee to Floyd's throat while two police officers pinned him down on his stomach. Before Floyd completely lost consciousness, he was yelling "I can't breathe" and calling for his late mother. Floyd was initially detained after being accused of using a counterfeit $20 bill.

==image Protesters cheer as the Third Police Precinct burns behind them on May 28, 2020 in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Even though the police officers — Derek Chauvin, Thomas Lane, J. Alexander Kueng and Tou Thao — were fired after the incident, none of them were immediately arrested and charged with Floyd's death. It took four days after the lynching for John Harrington, commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Public Safety, to announce that Chauvin was arrested and charged with third-degree murder and second-degree manslaughter. The other officers still have not been arrested or charged.

The Floyd family is demanding that officers Lane, Keung and Thao be charged with various degrees of murder, and Chauvin be charged with first-degree murder.

An independent autopsy on June 1, paid for by the Floyd

family, found that police were responsible for his death by "medical asphyxia" when he was deprived of oxygen to the brain for almost five minutes. He died at the scene, not at the hospital. This autopsy's findings contradict the initial findings released by the Hennepin County medical examiner, which claimed that preexisting conditions caused Floyd's death, not homicide by cops.

On May 26 protests began to erupt in Minneapolis and other cities demanding justice for Floyd and arrests of the officers. In an audacious act on May 28, youth torched the Minneapolis Police Department's Third Precinct Headquarters, where the four officers had worked.

Dozens of curfews declared in many cities — backed up by the presence of local and state police and the National Guard — have not deterred young people from exercising their right to stay in the streets to let their outraged voices be heard, even if they had to take arrests for "civil disobedience," if necessary. Thousands of people have been arrested for breaking curfew over six days of political outrage, expressed by burning cop cars and shutting down bridges and interstates.

Even reporters from mainstream media like CNN and MSNBC have either been detained or indiscriminately hit with rubber bullets and pepper spray, along with protesters. Isolated incidences of young people, including children, being tased, pepper-sprayed and knocked down by riot police were caught on videotape and shown on social media.

Young protesters have used guerrilla-like tactics to evade police, who are armed to the teeth with batons, rubber bullets, chemical irritants and even tanks. The youth have had only rocks, water bottles, bricks and even skateboards to defend themselves with.

White supremacy and police violence linked

Young people are fed up with not only what happened to Floyd, but with police killings of Philando Castile, Jamar Clark and other Black people in Minnesota.

In fact this uprising — which has spread to at least 130 large

and small U.S. cities — has helped to expose the cases of other Black people who recently lost their lives to police violence. These include Breonna Taylor, the 26-year-old EMT worker who was shot eight times in her bed on March 13 by Louisville, Ky. police; Tony McDade, a trans man shot to death on May 27 in Tallahassee, Fla.; and David McAtee, a popular vendor fatally shot today, also by Louisville police — just to name a few.

The protests have linked these individual cases to all forms of police violence in Black and Brown communities, including disproportionate cases of harassment, arrests and shootings. Eighteen complaints had been filed against Chauvin for misconduct; only two were heard.

Many of the signs carried in the protests read: "Abolish the police!" "All cops are bad!" and "All cops are bastards!"

Systemic racism has also been a big focus of the protests. Protesters cited an incident when Christian Cooper, a Black man birdwatching in New York's Central Park on May 25, was approached by Amy Cooper, a white woman. She called 911 to tell the police " there's an African-American man threatening my life," which endangered him. And demonstrators raised the name of Ahmaud Arbery, an unarmed jogger who was shot to death on Feb. 23 by white supremacists near Brunswick, Ga. It took police two months to arrest them and the third person who recorded the video of the shooting.

White supremacist, pro-Confederate symbols have not escaped the wrath of the protesters, who have toppled or defamed Confederate monuments in Birmingham, Ala.; Nashville, Tenn.; Richmond, Va.; and Charleston, S.C. The United Daughters of the Confederacy Memorial Building in Richmond and the Market House, the site of a slave auction in Fayetteville, N.C., were torched.

Global defense of solidarity

Trump has been called the "number one white supremacist" — and rightfully so. His tweets have referred to the protesters with the racist connotation of "thugs." He has stated that when the "looting" starts, the "shooting" starts. He has declared the

"antifa" movement (aka anti-fascists) a "terrorist" organization, and he has called governors "jerks" if they don't "dominate" and arrest protesters. By their very presence, the police incite violence, not the protesters.

Trump made a veiled threat to call out his neofascist base to confront the protesters before he backed off on that threat. Thousands of protesters confronted Secret Service agents and local police in Lafayette Park in Washington, D.C., across from the White House on June 1. For several nights firecrackers exploding were loud enough for those in the White House to hear.

There is no telling how long this uprising will last, whether it will be days or weeks or longer. There is one absolute: This rebellion is unprecedented for not only being composed of predominantly young people, but it is multinational with Black, Latinx, Indigenous, Asian and white protesters joining together. They refuse to be silent when it comes to being in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement and for condemning all forms of police violence.

This uprising, much like the pandemic, has impacted every sector of U.S. society.

Prominent amateur and professional sports figures have spoken out against racism, and in some cases, attended demonstrations along with entertainers.

Protesters have taken a knee in the streets in solidarity with former National Football League quarterback Colin Kaepernick, who first took a knee in 2016 in opposition to police brutality.

This uprising has also had a ripple effect around the globe, with solidarity actions in cities in Africa and the Middle East, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Britain, Germany, Iran, Ireland, Italy, New Zealand and elsewhere.

Liberal bourgeois and reactionary politicians and their media mouthpieces are attempting to drive a wedge between participants in the uprising, labeling many Black protesters "peaceful" and many white protesters "anarchists."

These apologists for the ruling class are fearful of how far and how deep this rebellion could go in rupturing the fragile capitalist

system, already reeling from the coronavirus pandemic and the ongoing economic crisis.

This rebellion needs political solidarity, not isolation! That is reason enough to demand: No police state! No military dictatorship! Amnesty for all arrestees! Withdraw the police and National Guard! No justice! No peace!

*Omitted illustrations, graphs, appendices, footnotes can be found online where this article originally appeared. See Sources of articles at the end of the book for web addresses.

New Data Examines Political Anti-Chinese Rhetoric and Anti-AAPI Hate

我们坚定地与系统性种族主义的受害者们站在一起！

Olivia Idris (617) 480-2749 oidris@fenton.com

June 18, 2020, Chinese for Affirmative Action (CAA)

JUNE 18, 2020 — Stop AAPI Hate, the leading aggregator of incidents against Asian Americans during the pandemic, has compiled a new report examining the rise in hate incidents against Asian Americans and the anti-Chinese rhetoric by political leaders.

"We have seen time and again how dangerous it is when leaders scapegoat for political gain and use inflammatory rhetoric to stir up both interpersonal violence and racist policies. As we've seen throughout American history—from the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 to Japanese American wartime incarceration and most recently, immigration bans—Asians have been targeted with such vehement hate." — Dr. Russell Jeung, chair of Asian American Studies at San Francisco State University.

Last week, Stop AAPI Hate reported that as of May 13, incidents of anti-Asian America discrimination documented across the U.S. approached 1,900 since the start of the coronavirus pandemic. Of those incidents, approximately 502 incidents specifically mentioned the terms "China" or "Chinese" during the incidents of discrimination.

According to the report, it appears that there was a spike of incidents reported to the website after President Trump repeatedly employed the term, "Chinese Virus." There are a number of variables that could explain this correlation; nonetheless, Stop AAPI Hate contends that the president's and the Republican party's anti-Chinese rhetoric have entrenched racism and xenophobia in the public's perception of the coronavirus pandemic.

Recent news reports have drawn the conclusion that the president and other political leaders are stirring up anti-Chinese sentiment as a means to distract from both their handling of the coronavirus pandemic and the nationwide protests against deeply entrenched racism and violence against Black Americans in law enforcement.

"We condemn the racist, inciteful and violent rhetoric coming from the president and political leaders at the very top, who racialize tragedies to score political points and distract from their own mishandling of the pandemic. This rhetoric continues to devastate and harm communities of color in America." – Cynthia Choi, Co-Executive Director, Chinese for Affirmative Action.

In turn, the president is currently pouring money into campaign ads against China. On April 17, the GOP sent a memo to campaigns stating that (1) China caused the virus by covering it up, (2) Democrats are "soft on China", and (3) Republicans will push for sanctions on China for its role in spreading the virus.

Other government leaders are picking up Trump's racist language—Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) and Rep. Paul A. Gosar (R-Ariz.) have used similar language. Senator Martha McSally, up for re-election, recently said, "China is to blame for this pandemic and the death of thousands of Americans."

Most significantly, last month the president introduced a ban limiting Chinese students in the United States, raising concerns from a number of Asian American leaders.

In its report on the 502 incidents of discrimination and harassment with a clear link to anti-Chinese sentiment, Stop AAPI Hate noted that the following trends emerged:

Virulent animosity towards Chinese, with 37.5% of these cases laced with profanity and verbal taunts Scapegoating of China for the spread of COVID-19, with 31.7% of the perpetrators blaming China or Chinese people as the source of the disease Anti-immigrant nationalism of the assailants as they demand that Asian Americans "go back to China" or view China as the enemy (20.3%) Parroting of the term, "Chinese virus" to imply the implicit association between COVID-19 and China (17.5%)

Orientalist and racist depictions of China and Chinese people as dirty, diseased, and holding strange dietary habits (12.6%)

"President Trump continues to utilize white supremacist and nationalist views as a means of scapegoating his failures for political gain. Unless we hold him accountable, the discrimination and harassment against Asian Americans will become deeply entrenched, cause unimaginable harm and suffering, and take decades to unwind." – Manjusha P. Kulkarni, Executive Director of Asian Pacific Policy and Planning Council.

Racism, lack of jobs as workers face social pandemic

By G. Dunkel
June 12, 2020, Workers World

On June 5, President Donald Trump was over the moon with joy. The numbers were "stupendous," "AMAZING" and "INCREDIBLE." The Dow Jones stock index was up by 829 points, or 3.2 percent, so speculators who bet right made billions.

It didn't last. June 11 saw a decline of 1,800 points.

The Department of Labor reports that more than 1.5 million U.S. workers filed for new state unemployment checks that week — bringing the total number of new claims to nearly 40 million since the crisis began.

In addition, some 700,000 workers who were self-employed or otherwise ineligible for state jobless benefits filed new claims for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance, a federal aid program. However, the PUA is scheduled to sunset at the end of July, threatening a huge income loss for tens of millions of workers.

Back in May, nonfarm payrolls actually rose by 2.5 million, when most predictions had estimated a job loss of anywhere from 3 million to 8 million. However, close to 19.5 million workers are still unemployed.

This hiring took place in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. Millions of people in the streets were calling the brutal murder of a handcuffed Black man by a racist cop a social pandemic.

The official unemployment rate for May was 13.3 percent, a slight decline from April, but Black workers saw their jobless rate climb. A broader measure of the impact of unemployment, which takes into better account discouraged and part-time workers, is 21.2 percent — one out of every five U.S. workers is unemployed.

In the United States, most workers who lose their jobs also lose health insurance. The much-praised "social safety net" is in tatters.

Social consequences of unemployment

The capitalist class in the United States now wants to force unemployed workers to take a job, any job, no matter how dangerous or low paid. This attack on workers' incomes drags down the economy because workers won't earn enough to buy the goods and services they would normally consume.

For those workers who should qualify for unemployment insurance (UI), the requirements vary. Income levels and time worked are usually prominent reasons given for not providing UI. Undocumented workers are almost always excluded. Even documented foreign nationals often have problems.

It can take weeks to open a UI claim. Most states have underfunded their systems and haven't had the staff, computer capacity or phone lines to handle the COVID-19 surge that began in March.

Some jobless workers have waited 8 to 10 weeks to get the first payments on their unemployment claims. New York state supplies UI benefits on a cash card or direct deposit for workers who have a bank account that accepts such payments.

In New York City, the UI cash card can be fully used at only one Key Bank branch in lower Manhattan. People have sometimes had to travel for hours from all over the city and then wait in line for more hours to get the money to pay rent and buy food.

Since relaxing the stay-at-home requirements for restaurants and hospitality businesses like bars and cafés, employment in this sector of the economy — the one in which President Trump has his investments — has jumped by approximately 1.5 million workers. This might sound great, but employment in this sector is still only what it was in 1993.

Without workers producing surplus value in a functioning economy, the capitalist class loses a major source of the wealth they expropriate. The Congressional Budget Office, a nonpartisan organ of the U.S. Congress, estimates that from 2020 to 2030, unemployment will cost the U.S. economy $15.7 trillion.

That spells increasing misery for millions of workers.

SECTION 5:
Global aid from China

China and Cuba lead in curbing pandemic

By Lyn Neeley
March 26, 2020, Workers World

China and Cuba have made significant scientific advances in curbing the COVID-19 pandemic. China is considered the world's front-runner in the development of a vaccine, while Cuba's antiviral drug, Interferon Alpha 2b, is reducing the number of deaths. Both countries, in outstanding acts of socialist internationalism, are sending doctors and medical supplies to suffering countries in the midst of the pandemic.

In contrast, the U.S. has a weak health care system infected by capitalism with no centralized plan. The government is allowing the virus to spread by relying on for-profit companies to supply testing kits and necessary medical equipment in the country.

The U.S. administration is worsening the virus globally by increasing sanctions and blocking aid to over 39 countries, containing one-third of the world's peoples.

On Dec. 31, China had alerted the World Health Organization about a new strain of the coronavirus that was causing a severe respiratory illness. WHO named the disease COVID-19. The actual virus that causes the disease is SARS-CoV-2, which was so designated by the International Committee on Taxonomy of Viruses.

Chinese doctors answer desperate call from Italy for medical help

Within a week, Chinese scientists had isolated the virus from a patient, sequenced its genome and published the information for the world to freely use. China's speed in sequencing a previously unknown genome was unprecedented.

Creating a vaccine for COVID-19

There are seven known coronaviruses and they all cause respiratory infections in humans. Once a coronavirus enters the body, it advances directly to the lungs and can cause a range of respiratory symptoms from dry cough to fever to viral pneumonia. Coronaviruses are zoonotic, meaning they transmit from animals to people.

The new, recent coronavirus, COVID-19, has a genome similar to SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome), MERS (Middle Eastern respiratory syndrome) and avian flu, which can only be contracted through direct contact with birds.

Coronaviruses are covered with spikes that form a crown or corona around the virus. These attach to lung cells with their spikes, allowing them to invade and kill the cells.

Many scientists are working on vaccines by focusing on two features of the virus — the hooks at the end of the spikes and also the point of contact where those hooks cleave or crack the cell wall to gain entrance into the cell.

China leads

As of March 14, China's CanSinoBio lab had begun testing a vaccine for COVID-19 in Wuhan province, where the virus was first identified. The lab developed a genetically altered SARS-CoV-2 virus that was unable to cause infection but was effective in creating antibodies. The vaccine proved safe in trials with animals so scientists are now testing the vaccine on a large group of 108 healthy adults, aged 18 to 60.

Chinese scientists successfully created a similar vaccine for Ebola in 2017. They also used their experience and technology to create the new vaccine against the SARS-CoV-2 virus.

Lagging behind China, a U.S. company, UModerna, says it will begin a smaller set of trials on people in Seattle with a vaccine that uses only a part of the SARS-CoV-2 genome.

In a process not yet ready to proceed to human trials, Regeneron Pharmaceuticals in Tarrytown, N.Y., genetically modified mice to have human immune systems. The mice

are exposed to the SARS-CoV-2 virus, causing a build-up of antibodies to fight the virus. Scientists have isolated the mouse antibodies and will combine them with antibodies from humans who have recovered from COVID-19. The company predicts making an antibody cocktail to use in human trials "soon."

Cuba's advanced pharmaceutical discovery

Cuba may have already developed a successful medicine able to cure some cases of COVID-19.

Interferon Alpha 2b is an antiviral drug that Cuba developed during a dengue fever outbreak in the Caribbean in 1981. This interferon drug creates conditions within cells that limit the replication of the SARS-CoV-2 and MERS viruses.

Interferon is a naturally occurring chemical in cells that alerts nearby cells of an invading virus, causing them to heighten their antiviral defenses. Dengue fever and coronaviruses have evolved the ability to destroy interferon and get through a cell's defenses.

Cuba's Interferon Alpha 2b was designed to mimic the response of the cells' natural interferon and thus boost the immune system against the illness.

Cuba and China unite to fight COVID-19

In China, the Cuban-Chinese company, ChangHeber, has been producing Interferon Alpha 2b since 2003. That drug helps people with compromised immune systems avoid some of the complications of viral invasions.

As soon as COVID-19 was identified, China began using Interferon Alpha 2b on people who were infected by the virus, with over 1,500 people improving under the treatment. Cuban biotech specialist Dr. Luis Herrera Martinez explained that "its use prevents aggravation and complications in patients reaching that stage that ultimately can result in death." Dr. Herrera Martinez is the creator of Interferon Alpha 2b. (tinyurl.com/ur4sa4n)

Martinez asserted, "The world has an opportunity to understand that health is not a commercial asset but a basic right.

... [Cuba] has more physicians working abroad than practically any other country in the world, not because we are exporting anything but simply because we want to participate in building a world with better health conditions and living conditions."

After the Lombardy region in northern Italy officially requested doctors and medical help from China and Cuba, both sent an emergency contingent of doctors and nurses. The 52-strong brigade arrived at Italy's Malpensa airport, near Milan, on March 22 as Italy reported 59,139 COVID-19 cases and 5,476 deaths.

This is the sixth medical brigade Cuba has sent abroad in recent days to combat the spread of the new disease, highlighting its revolutionary medical diplomacy. These brigades are being sent at a time when many Cuban hospitals are facing imperialist-imposed difficulties — they're unable to buy vital medicine abroad largely due to the blockade of decades-old U.S. sanctions.

China and Cuba's Medical Internationalism is a Shining Example of Global Solidarity

By Danny Haiphong
April 1, 2020, Black Agenda Report

CHINA SENDS MEDICAL equipment abroad, Cuba sends doctors and cutting-edge drugs, but the U.S. fails to provide its people, doctors and nurses with basic tools and protection.

U.S. imperialism has loathed China and Cuba ever since the mid-20th century when both nations pursued a revolutionary path and replaced the yoke of imperialism with their own forms of socialism. Americans are constantly bombarded with anti-communist and racist talking points which depict China and Cuba as "authoritarian" states that kill, torture, and repress the so-called democratic aspirations of their own people. The corporate media portrays the people of Cuba and China as backward stereotypes worthy only of the imperial targets placed on their backs. Most people residing in the U.S. are either unaware of their government's imperialist war crimes or find themselves too distracted to fight the U.S. sanctions against Cuba or the dangerous military provocations that successive U.S. presidential administrations have waged against China. The COVID-19 pandemic currently wreaking havoc on the U.S. and the West challenges the very legitimacy of the imperialist narrative against China and Cuba for the sheer fact that these maligned nations have been able to organize a heroic campaign of global solidarity to control the spread of the disease.

China was the first country to report an outbreak of COVID-19 in late December and the city of Wuhan has been under near total lockdown since January 23rd. After two months of aggressive measures to contain the virus, Wuhan and the rest of China are now reporting zero new domestic cases for consecutive days. This has allowed China to send its expertise and resources all

over the world to fight the spread of the virus. Billionaire and Chinese Communist Party member Jack Ma has sent millions of masks, testing kits, and other medical supplies to every country in Africa as well several Asian nations such as Thailand, Malaysia, and the Philippines. He has also sent a comparable number of medical supplies, including one million masks, to the United States' Center for Disease Control. However, Chinese aid hasn't been limited to Jack Ma's philanthropy. China's central government has sent medical and technical assistance to Italy, Iran, Greece, and Venezuela.

Chinese solidarity abroad comes just two months after COVID-19 was infecting several thousand people per day with a mortality rate of around two to three percent. Once the outbreak was contained, China immediately shifted its focus to the world stage. Contrast this with the United States, which failed to make any preparations for COVID-19 despite the month and a half that China provided the rest of the world to ready itself for the virus' spread. China is sending protective medical equipment abroad while massive shortages of the same equipment exists in the United States. New York City alone is short nearly 90,000 hospital beds and tens of thousands of ventilators needed to keep up with the demand of the pandemic. COVID-19 demonstrates that the U.S. is an Empire in decline and as such is incapable of meeting the most basic of needs that ordinary people possess in this crisis, let alone in the rest of the world.

China has approached the COVID-19 pandemic like it approaches foreign policy generally: with a win-win orientation. China has not only provided guidance and direct support to nations all over the world experiencing the COVID-19 pandemic but has also gained much from its cooperation with others, especially Cuba. Cuba produces over twenty medications that are effective in preventing and spreading viruses such as COVID-19. Through a long-standing joint venture between Cuba and China in the biotech industry, Chinese medical personnel have been able to use the Cuban-made Recombinant Human Interferon Alpha 2B to prevent contraction of COVID-19 and to assist patients in their early stages from developing severe symptoms. Such coordination has likely saved thousands of lives in China alone and is a

shining example of what global solidarity can achieve in periods of crisis.

Cuba is no stranger to the concept of medical internationalism.

Nearly thirty thousand Cuban doctors are deployed all over the world to provide healthcare free of cost to the most oppressed nations across the planet. Cuba also trains a staggering number of doctors from abroad free of cost at its Latin American School of Medicine. Cuba offered medical and humanitarian assistance to the United States during Hurricane Katrina despite being crippled by a U.S.-imposed embargo that only worsened over the course of successive U.S. administrations. Now Cuba is at the forefront of assisting the nations most imperiled by COVID-19. Cuba has sent fifty-two doctors to Italy. Similar contingents have also been sent to Suriname, Grenada, Jamaica and thirty-three other nations.

U.S. imperialism is the structural antithesis of social solidarity. While Cuba and China are demonized as pariah states, the U.S.' actual pariah state continues its policy of endless war amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Venezuela, Iran, and over thirty other nations find themselves at risk of massive economic and social catastrophe from the pandemic as a result of the U.S.' commitment to isolating their economies. Many countries around the world were already living through an imperial nightmare prior to the emergence of COVID-19. Over 70 percent of people in Yemen lack access to clean water, food, and adequate healthcare as a result of the ongoing U.S.-Saudi war on the country. Palestinians in Gaza find themselves in a very similar situation to the people of Yemen as they continue to suffer from the impact of Israel's colonial siege.

The COVID-19 pandemic only intensifies the need for a radical mass movement in the U.S. that places international solidarity at the forefront of its demands. This movement must publicly condemn the U.S. warfare state and ask how is it that the entire capitalist economy can grind to a halt while trillions continue to be pumped into waging war abroad. While the Trump administration and its Democratic Party scheme over what kind of half-measures they will enact to subdue the frustrations bubbling within the masses, over half of the U.S. population has

been pauperized to a degree never seen in the history of the U.S. Empire. The contradictions of U.S. imperialism threaten economic collapse, but the fact that majorities in Black America and other oppressed nations have already been living through an economic and social catastrophe prior to the pandemic must be acknowledged as well. Any and every malady of imperialism that affects the working class impacts Black America twice over. The fallout from COVID-19 has been no different, as Black Americans are likely being denied access to what limited testing exists in the United States.

The racist and anti-human character of the U.S. makes painstakingly clear that the question of power over the state, the apparatus which directs and manages class society, must be at the top of anyone's mind who seeks to transform this system. Mutual aid efforts, while important, cannot address the enormous economic problems that struggling people are facing and cannot stem the tide of war imposed upon so many of the most oppressed sections of U.S. society, let alone the rest of the world. That both political parties took so long to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and have yet to address the extreme destitution of the workers indicates that power in the U.S. rests fully with the corporate oligarchs and their appointed political managers that administer the state. Private profit and its maximization are not merely prioritized; they are the basis for all social organization and policy of the imperialist world order. Such a social system cannot meet the demands of a global crisis when those demands overwhelmingly involve the deliverance of basic human needs.

Cuba and China's socialist planned economies were not wished into existence. They began with the overthrow of the old order of colonial and imperial terror and the subsequent redistribution of wealth to the workers and oppressed. Cuba's internationalist missions abroad could only be possible if the basic human rights of healthcare, education, housing, and decent employment were available to all. Like Cuba, China has more than doubled its life expectancy since 1949 and has nearly eradicated absolute poverty. All the while China has developed the second largest economy in the world that currently leads all

others in the way of clean energy production and public investments like high-speed rail. China's high-tech planned economy has served as the basis for its immensely effective COVID-19 response.

None of these achievements would be possible were it not for a revolution that placed the ready-made state machinery into the hands of oppressed people. Cuba and China's socialist systems have given them the means to act as shining examples of global solidarity. It is past time for the left in the United States to take a hard look and apply whatever lessons can be derived from the Cuban and Chinese experience that may be useful to our own concrete conditions. We have a duty to ensure that the crisis created by COVID-19 doesn't leave the struggling masses in the U.S. in an even weaker political position. We also have a duty to stand in solidarity with China and Cuba as they face the U.S. imperialist beast and at the same time provide critical assistance to nations seeking to address COVID-19 in a manner consistent with the needs of humanity.

Danny Haiphong is an activist and journalist in the New York City area. He and Roberto Sirvent are co-authors of the book entitled American Exceptionalism and American Innocence: A People's History of Fake News–From the Revolutionary War to the War on Terror (Skyhorse Publishing). He can be reached at wakeupriseup1990@gmail.com, on Twitter @spiritofho, and on Youtube at The Left Lens with Danny Haiphong.

Solidarity vs. Sanctions in Times of a Global Pandemic

Roxana Baspineiro
April 15, 2020, Telesur English

As THE COVID-19 pandemic wreaks havoc globally –leaving more than 124,000 dead so far– capitalism has never before faced a similar threat. In the face of a global crisis, it has become clear that international solidarity is an alternative to rethinking the dynamics that characterize today's geopolitics.

Cuban doctors have been providing support in the most vulnerable countries in Latin America, Africa and Europe.

With the world immersed for almost two months now in quarantine and long-term suspension of activities, the economy has suffered one of its greatest blows, with billions upon billions in losses and millions of people facing financial uncertainty. The world's leading international institutions warn that it could face the worst recession since the 1930s.

All this happening along with the health crisis with inefficient governments having to cope with the impact of the virus. Nations such as the United States, France or the United Kingdom face trouble after the collapse of their weakened health systems due to decades of under-funding and neoliberal austerity, showing how the neoliberal capitalist model failed in providing health and safety to the majority of the population.

Experts say that as private medical schools, private hospitals, and private pharmaceutical companies skyrocket in recent times, the public system has withered, and as a result, millions of people in the world suffer the consequences, perhaps more than the impact of the virus itself.

On the other hand, the negligence of neoliberal governments has also been seen when they oppose adopting responsible prevention policies in the face of the pandemic, placing the economic interests of the dominant groups, the transnational

corporations or of themselves above the protection, care and fundamental right of life.

Amid this bewilderment, international solidarity, from countries like Cuba and China, emerges as a vital principle in the fight against the virus that also compares two state models (socialist and neoliberal) in the heart of what the crisis exposed: geopolitical dispute and its global alternatives, imperialist intervention and modes of domination in times of crises. International solidarity vs. sanctions in light of the pandemic.

If there is anything that the COVID-19 crisis has brought forward, besides the health emergency and the lack of certain public policies, has been to highlight the tense rivalry between the United States and countries that pose a threat to its imperialist model such as China, Cuba, Iran, and Venezuela.

Faced with the chaos of the pandemic, the international solidarity of China and Cuba has been, according to some analysts, key to understanding the shortcomings of the current capitalist and neoliberal system.

Chinese and Cuban doctors have been providing support in Iran, Italy, Spain and have offered their services and expertise to the most vulnerable countries in Latin America, Africa, and Europe. They have developed medicines and medical treatments such as Interferon Alpha 2B in Cuba, one of the potential medicines to combat the virus, which reduces the mortality rate of people affected by COVID19. But above all, they have offered their interest in distributing them to the peoples of the world without any patent or benefit whatsoever.

According to the activist and head of the French Association Cuba Linda, Rose-Marie Lou, Cuba's experience in the face of the pandemic's expansion proves what it is possible to do when there is an organized public health system and a society that is governed by principles and values of solidarity and altruism, taking into account that Cuba faces the impact of the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States for over 60 years.

According to the activist, a recent proof of Cuba's solidarity was the reception of the cruise ship MS Braemar, a ship that

sailed through the Caribbean with more than a thousand people on board, including passengers and crew, with five positive cases of COVID-19 and several travelers in quarantine, with no port in the region willing to open doors.

"Cuba will receive and provide care to travelers with coronavirus from the British cruise ship MS Braemar. We are consistent with our conviction of solidarity with humanity," Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel said.

Cuba has a long history of medical cooperation and its professionals are internationally recognized for their great capabilities, solidarity, and commitment, which has been ratified in the face of the new coronavirus spread, the Washington Office for Latin American Affairs (WOLA) highlighted.

==image Second group of Cuban doctors arrived in Belize on March 27 to help combat the COVID-19 pandemic.

Currently, the Caribbean country provides medical support to at over 59 nations, including Italy, Venezuela, Nicaragua, Belize, Honduras, Caribbean countries such as Haiti, Jamaica, Barbados and African countries such as Angola, Togo, and others.

China, for its part, has sent health aid to more than 80 countries during this crisis. In the cases of Italy, Spain, Cuba, Venezuela, Iran and other countries, the Chinese government also sent doctors and infectologists specialized in treating the pandemic.

Chinese President Xi Jinping stressed that humanity is a community with a shared future and that only through unity and coordination can we all address various global risks and challenges. Chinese doctors arrived in Venezuela to support the fight against the pandemic.

Despite the accusations and attacks by the U.S., China has maintained diplomacy by leading international solidarity in the face of the pandemic, highlighted and recognized by the international community.

Venezuela, despite the U.S. sanctions, had recently shared part of the aid received to Caribbean countries such as Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Antigua and Barbuda, as well as Dominica and Grenada. "To our brothers in the Caribbean,

brothers with whom we share the Caribbean Sea, we have offered our solidarity," the Vice President of Venezuela Delcy Rodriguez said.

In times of uncertainty and chaos, some experts say, most heads of government around the world resort to fear to baffle the population. Strategically they somehow manage to feed the panic for some kind of benefit.

"Panic is a natural reaction, accelerated by the general disintegration of social ties," they say. Therefore, once the social fabric is cracked, manipulation is easier.

It is for this very reason, the idea of "international solidarity" does not work for the status quo of the dominant system and its interests. International solidarity implies recognizing basic human values and this is precisely something that the leaders of countries like the United States ignore.

As COVID-19 spreads affecting already vulnerable nations such as Iran or Venezuela, a humanitarian response from the United States would have been to end the sanctions and let them import medical equipment and supplies. However, the response from the U.S. has been to worsen the conditions already devastated by the sanctions.

On March 26, the U.S. government added sanctions against shipping, restriction and the chemical industry of Iran, which is now the country most affected in the Middle East by the pandemic.

According to Human Rights Watch, punitive measures have devastated the health system and hampered the ability of Iranians to access health care. Something that was already complicated before the virus hit the nation.

For his part, the Venezuelan Minister of Foreign Affairs Jorge Arreaza, in an interview with researchers from the Tricontinental: Institute for Social Research said that his country is facing "difficulties for the timely acquisition of medicines" in front of COVID-19, but that, Venezuela, like Iran, has been assisted by China, Cuba and the World Health Organization (WHO).

Amid the pandemic, unilateral U.S. sanctions take on special criminal significance, the Tricontinental researchers say.

For economist Jeffrey Sachs, Director of the Center for

Sustainable Development at Columbia University "while sanctions themselves cause tens of thousands of unnecessary deaths, the lethal damage during the new coronavirus pandemic can be much worse in countries where imports of medicines, medical equipment, as well as water, sanitation, and health system infrastructure are restricted due to the impact of United States sanctions."

"Trump administration uses these sanctions against Iran and Venezuela to pressure their governments by inducing widespread suffering," Sachs added, calling the policy inadmissible and flagrantly violating international law.

On the other hand, it is common for the U.S. government to be accustomed to let people die. In Afghanistan, thousands have died in an 18-year-old conflict that until this day has no end in sight. In the 1990s, U.S. strategists accepted that the Iraqi people would die because of the economic sanctions they were imposing. The deaths of 500,000 children there were "worth it," then-Secretary of State Madeleine Albright said. And, sadly, U.S. foreign policy teems with examples of this behavior.

In fact, U.S. decision-making in the face of the COVID-19 epidemic and military deployment in the Caribbean under the guise of "anti-drug" combat, justly reveals the indifference and necropolitics with which Washington observes suffering and life. Thus coronavirus becomes a weapon of war since nothing can stop the United States from continuing its military and interventionist plans.

The United States has also ignored governments and international organizations such as the European Union (EU), the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), U.N. rapporteurs, economists, the request of certain G20 countries, even the request of the Catholic Church's Pope, who have asked the U.S. to lift sanctions so that nations can fight against the pandemic.

For its part, the EU recalled that all economic sanctions imposed by both the U.S. and other countries "always carry a humanitarian clause or exception" whereby sanctions are put on

hold in the face of a humanitarian emergency such as that which is causing the new coronavirus.

Meanwhile, the U.S. has the highest number of deaths from COVID-19 in the world, exceeding 22,000. For the first time in the country's history, a presidential disaster declaration is currently in effect in all 50 states. And coronavirus cases exceed more than half a million. Militarization will be a smokescreen? Activists and leaders supporting the lifting of sanctions due to COVID-19 ask.

Moreover, in the face of world economic collapse, the U.S. government avoids any criticism of capitalism, opting for criticism and attacks on China or interference in the internal affairs of other countries, as it would never touch the system it serves. Therefore, it is more productive to create chaos and to urge the international community to reject the Cuban medical brigades, for example, dismiss the top White House epidemiologist against the virus or suspend funds to the World Health Organization (WHO).

International solidarity as a geopolitical strategy makes sense amid all this complexity of factors.

To think that as the virus spreads to the most vulnerable countries in Latin America, the role played by Cuban doctors in the region becomes essential in the face of the limitations that remained in public health systems after current governments in Brazil, Ecuador or Bolivia will expel them from their territories.

Zero tolerance towards Cuba by the Trump administration and allied governments in the region ended past agreements with the Cuban government that sent medical brigades, mainly to the poorest regions in those countries, which are now fighting to face the virus, with dead people lying in the streets as happens in Ecuador.

That is why the consequences of interventionist and neoliberal policies that superimpose capital over life in times of crisis, can only have a frightening and multidimensional effect on social life, whose wounds are still hard to imagine.

The current global crisis, although it has been one of the greatest struggles the world has had to face, also aptly sums

up the increasingly common feeling that the perversion of the capitalist system, once again, has failed in its entirety. It harshly presents the complexity of the problem and leaves a light at the end of the road that demands of the world only one thing: change.

*Omitted illustrations, graphs, appendices, footnotes can be found online where this article originally appeared. See Sources of articles at the end of the book for web addresses.

China's Solidarity Aid to the World During the Corona Pandemic

Stansfield Smith
May 13, 2020, Chicago ALBA Solidarity

CHINA'S WORLDWIDE ASSISTANCE and medical aid to other countries to combat the coronavirus is barely covered in the corporate press. Instead, the US has ramped up its anti-China campaign to cover up its own incompetence in combating the virus. As John Pilger shows in his Obama era film The Coming War on China, this is no new campaign.

The US empire realizes that China is slowly putting the US out of business around the world. If the point comes where the US can no longer impose the dollar as the medium of international exchange – still a long way away – it would rapidly go the way of the old British empire. The rise of China also signifies the setting of the white man's bloody 500-year world hegemony.

China displayed before the world its effective strategy in shutting down the coronavirus. In contrast, every day Washington shows the world it is incapable of effective response and cannot control of the situation. Back on March 13, when US coronavirus deaths were just 40, Trump declared a national health emergency. Now, after eight weeks of "emergency" measures, the official US death count surpasses 87,000, and grows about 2,000 a day.

Over 50 years ago the United States would have been leading the international battle to fight the pandemic, as it had done with polio. Today, there is a vacuum that China – and Cuba – are filling. (Cuba has 2,030 medical personnel in other countries combating COVID-19).

"This Administration's retreat from multilateralism has been a boon for Chinese soft power," Virginia Senator Mark Warner (D) told Newsweek. The US has "historically been a leader in responding to global emergencies, but with President Donald

Trump's retreat from the world stage, we're seeing the Chinese government, and its proxies, fill the void," he added.

Even CNBC reports " 'This is the first international crisis where China is actively taking a global leadership role and it stands in particular contrast to the US, which has disdained international cooperation and invested more political capital in criticizing China for its role in allowing the outbreak to spread,' said analysts from the Eurasia Group in a report this week. On social and state media, China continues to promote its shipments of medical supplies to hard hit countries in Europe and Africa."

China's leader Xi Jinping has sought to rally the world, declaring the two most powerful weapons against the disease were solidarity and cooperation, that the virus can only be defeated when the international community fights in unity. "It is imperative for the international community to strengthen confidence, act with unity and work together in a collective response," Xi said at the G20 summit on March 26. "We must comprehensively step up international cooperation and foster greater synergy so that humanity as one could win the battle against such a major infectious disease." He proposed a four-point program including a G20 joint action plan to lead the struggle to combat the virus and revive the world economy.

China has been supplying the world with medical supplies through donations and sales. The US, in contrast, has continued its bombings in Iraq, regime change attempts, and has blocked medical aid by the IMF and by other countries to Cuba, Venezuela and Iran. The US also capitalized on the pandemic to round up immigrants for deportation, ignoring advice from public health officials.

China Daily published an article "COVID-19 shows the demise of so-called American leadership," which observed, "China has taken the lead to support the world during the crisis." This was evident even in Europe as US-allied countries found themselves turning to China rather than Washington and saw the Trump administration pirating supplies meant for other crisis-stricken countries, including Germany, Canada, Italy and France.

Cuba has also been a model of medical solidarity in face of the virus pandemic. By the end of March more than 850 Cuban

health professionals have traveled abroad to help fight COVID-19. Washington has responded by retaliating, obstructing Cuba's ability to combat the virus at home by blocking the sale of Swiss respirators, blocking Cuba's ability to import pharmaceutical raw materials, and even blocking a major coronavirus donation by Jack Ma from China. This led to over 25 U.S. lawmakers signing a letter to President Trump to allow Cuba access to medical supplies to fight the virus.

By early April over 100 Chinese public health experts, using their experience in Wuhan, had traveled to other countries to help in their efforts. At that time, 14 medical teams were working in 12 countries, which now include Iran, Iraq, Italy, Spain, Serbia, Cambodia, Pakistan, Venezuela, Cuba, Russia, Philippines, Nigeria and Algeria. By mid-April, China had already sent medical donations to 140 countries. Moreover, as the US cut its funding to the World Health Organization, China compensated by donating an extra $30 million on top of a previous $20 million.

This information is rarely reported in the US corporate press, which then typically faults China for underhanded ulterior motives, for exporting substandard masks (and then for holding up exports to meet other nation's standards), for covering up and lying to the world about their efforts to control the virus, and so on.

Here are examples of China's international solidarity and other countries' gratitude:

Chinese Donations to Canada and the US

Soon after Trump blocked 3M from shipping N95 masks to Canada, to prioritize US domestic needs, Huawei flew large quantities of medical supplies to Canadian provinces. Canada received over a million masks, 50,000 gloves and 30,000 goggles, with five million more masks to follow. Newsweek noted, "their generosity has been accepted and appreciated by Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau."

CNN reported that Joe and Clara Tsai, owner of the Brooklyn Nets, donated from China 2.6 million masks, 170,000 goggles and 2,000 ventilators. Joe Tsai founded Alibaba, the giant Chinese

e-commerce company, along with Jack Ma, and is its Executive Vice President. New York Governor Andrew Cuomo thanked them, "The Chinese government helped facilitate a donation of 1,000 ventilators that will arrive in JFK today. I thank the Chinese government, Jack Ma, Joe Tsai, the Jack Ma Foundation, the Tsai Foundation and [China's New York] Consul General Huang."

China's ambassador to the US, Cui Tiankai in a New York Times op-ed, China and the U.S. Must Cooperate Against Coronavirus, wrote that "Huawei donated tens of thousands of personal protective items, including masks, gloves and goggles, to New York and Washington, D.C. In total, Chinese companies have donated 1.5 million masks, 200,000 test kits, 180,000 gloves and many other medical supplies to the United States."

China also aided Oregon, sight of the initial US outbreak. Oregon Governor Kate Brown thanked China for "The very generous donation of 50,000 much-needed masks for Oregonians," on top of an earlier 12,000 masks.

Terry Branstad, the US Ambassador to China, also acknowledged Chinese assistance:

"A few months later, we find our roles are reversed – China is now providing PPE for the US medical system, including donations from private Chinese entities. The United States has greatly appreciated the many contributions of PPE and medical supplies by Chinese companies and other organizations. These contributions have been both commercial exports and donations, both large and small, both immediate and long-term. But the American people are tremendously grateful for the support from the Chinese people, and our Mission has been touched by the many heartfelt offers to assist us in our time of need."

China's Aid and Donations to Europe

China sent ten medical personnel to Russia in early April and a total of 150 million masks. It sent medical aid to numerous European Union countries, including Poland, Belarus, Romania, Hungary, Greece, France, Italy, Bulgaria, Slovenia, Estonia, and Spain.

Chinese doctors arrived in Italy March 9 shortly after

European Union nations turned down Italy's requests for help with medical supplies. Maurizio Massari, Italy's EU ambassador to the European Union, said "not a single EU country responded to the Commission's call....Only China responded bilaterally. Certainly, this is not a good sign of European solidarity." Besides doctors, China supplied Italy with desperately needed medical equipment, including contracts for 10,000 pulmonary ventilators, 2 million face masks and 20,000 protective suits.

Not just Italy experienced the EU cold shoulder and China's generosity. Czech President Zeman noted, "I would therefore like to thank the People's Republic of China, which was the only country that has helped us" when they appealed for aid. Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskiy responded similarly: "We agreed with China and we are grateful to them, especially grateful to Jack Ma as he helped us by financing the $80 million."

China's offers of donations to the EU as a whole and to individual member states is "highly appreciated," declared an EU spokesperson. Both China and the EU regarded China's help as reciprocating the aid Europe sent to China during its coronavirus crisis.

To Africa

In March, the Chinese government and Chinese businessman Jack Ma donated 500 ventilators, 800,000 personal protective equipment, 6 million masks, and 1.1 million test kits to Ethiopia for distribution among African countries. Each of the 54 African states would receive at least 20,000 test kits, 100,000 masks and 1,000 protective suits.

"There is a desperate need for the medical protective equipment and gear to support public health workers in Africa and China's donations fill a part of that need at a time when not many other people have been stepping up to help," says Eric Olander, managing editor of The China Africa Project.

A 13-member Chinese medical team arrived in Algeria late March with $450,000 of respirators and other medical equipment, while a 15-member team came to Nigeria.

To Asia

Chinese medical personnel have served in Iran, Iraq and Pakistan. Chinese experts have visited Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar and the Philippines, arriving with medical donations.

Medical aid from both the Chinese government and businesses have reached Indonesia, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Azerbaijan, Japan, South Korea, among other nations. Teams of experts have traveled to Asian countries for two or three weeks, visiting hospitals and laboratories, holding discussions with health professionals on measures that the host countries are taking to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Twelve Chinese medical experts arrived in Manila on April 5 to help their Philippine counterparts manage the outbreak. The team again came with government donations of personal protective equipment, surgical masks, medical protective face shields and 30 ventilators.

The Palestinian Authority received an assistance package of 50,000 coronavirus testing kits. The Palestinian Health Minister, Mai Al-Kaila, told local reporters that aid was provided in cooperation with Jack Ma, e-commerce giant Alibaba's co-founder.

To Latin America

From the Southern Cone to Central America, governments have received a wide range of donations, from testing kits to ventilators. Venezuela was one of the first to receive Chinese medical supplies, which came shortly after the International Monetary Fund rejected President Maduro's request for a $5 billion loan to strengthen his country's fight against the virus. "We want to thank President Xi Jinping, his government and his people from the bottom of our Bolivarian heart," said Vice-President Delcy Rodríguez.

Reuters reported, "China has won praise among Latin American governments that have accepted its help. The Chinese government said it has supplied test kits, protective suits and

other forms of medical aid to more than 80 countries and international organizations."

"Thank you China for cooperation and solidarity with Ecuador!" the hard hit country's Vice President Otto Sonnenholzner wrote.

Not only did Cuba receive aid from the Chinese government and Jack Ma (which was reshipped through Chinese channels to avoid the US blockade), but Chinese students also delivered humanitarian aid. More than 280 Chinese students, who had previously studied in Cuba under a scholarship provided by the island authorities, collected about 140,000 yuan ($ 19,823). This money was used to purchase 420 sets of protective medical equipment as well as 38,750 medical masks.

President Xi Jinping stressed how, since the beginning of the epidemic, Cuban authorities have expressed their support for China, an attitude that demonstrates "the deep traditional friendship shared by the two countries."

Conclusion

China has responded to the present US anti-China disinformation campaign by presenting a timeline of what they knew and how they responded. (here, here, here) As US coronavirus deaths continued to mount, almost one third of the world total, and as the US economy nose-dived, Trump tried to deflect blame for the disastrous handling of the coronavirus on to China. Before this, Trump had praised China's effort.

The US has long been underfunding the community health centers and programs which could have played a valuable role in combating the spread of the virus. State public health departments have lost more than 55,000 staff since 2008. That our trust in the US government to protect our welfare is at historic lows also contributes to the ineffectual US "shelter in place" programs, which hardly compare with those in China, touched on in this short video.

From the responses to the coronavirus pandemic, the world has seen the model of public health efficiency China presented in controlling the problem at home. It has seen China's world leadership in offering international aid and care. It has seen the

abdication of leadership by the US and even its obstruction in working to find solutions. Now the US still cannot control the virus, and remains mired in economic crisis, while China is rebounding. In sum, the pandemic has made the world look at both China and the US in a new light. And it has dealt a serious blow to the US rulers' two decade long effort to counter the rise of China.

*Omitted illustrations, graphs, appendices, footnotes can be found online where this article originally appeared. See Sources of articles at the end of the book for web addresses.

SACP supports Extraordinary China-Africa Summit against COVID-19

Issued by Dr Alex Mohubetswane Mashilo
Central Committee Member for Media & Communications
The South African Communist Party | SACP
June 19, 2020

THE SOUTH AFRICAN Communist Party (SACP) welcomes the progressive thrust of the Joint Statement of the Extraordinary China-Africa Summit on Solidarity Against COVID-19. The statement was released on Thursday, 18 June 2020, following the summit, which was attended by African Heads of State. In particular, the SACP welcomes the call for a united response to, and collaborative efforts in the fight against the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). The summit was convened at a critical juncture in Africa's battle against COVID-19, following a joint initiative by China, South Africa in its capacity as the Chair of the African Union and Senegal in its capacity as the Co-Chair of the Forum on China-Africa Co-operation (FOCAC).

The commitment from the summit to jointly safeguard global public health security, protect the legitimate rights and interests of developing countries, make a greater contribution to world peace and development, and build a community of health for all is an important one. The SACP strongly supports the commitment and says: World peace and development should be bound up with justice. This must necessarily involve a decisive stand against imperialism, as well as the fight for democratic sovereignty.

The African continent as a collective and the various African states, individually, must thus unshackle themselves from the legacy of colonialism build a people-based healthcare system, having due regard to the relevant African conditions. The COVID-19 pandemic is one of the latest disasters to show that states that have a socialist outlook or adopted measures

with socialist orientation in their responses, such as solidarity, fare much better than those that derive their guidance from the capitalist dog-eat-dog market fundamentalism.

On the one hand, countries such as Cuba and China sent out medical brigades to assist other countries. This important intervention was based on solidarity. On the other hand, those that are guided by the profit maximising greed at the expense of human life were looking for opportunities to benefit financially from the pandemic, no matter the fatalities. As if that were not enough, the United States made use of the pandemic to intensify its imperialist aggression against other countries, such as Cuba and Venezuela, to name but a few.

The SACP welcomes support for the debt service suspension initiative and stance for the lifting of sanctions endorsed by the summit. The sanctions and the unjust and unsustainable international financial institutions' debt, interests and penalties are a serious problem in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. The SACP, therefore, reiterates its call for the international financial institutions' unjust and unsustainable debt, interests and penalties standing in the way of development in developing countries to be cancelled.

Before COVID-19, the world was gripped by a capitalist crisis. The crisis before COVID-19 is worsening as a result of the impact of COVID-19 crisis and imperialist aggression. In addition to heightening its imperialist aggression against Venezuela and other countries, including blocking humanitarian COVID-19 aid to Cuba, the United States announced its withdrawal from the World Health Organisation.

The SACP says: We cannot go back to the crisis before the crisis. The SACP calls for the various peoples of the world to unite not only against the COVID-19 but must also against capitalism.

SECTION 6:
Escalating anti-China campaign

China detaining millions of Uyghurs?

Serious problems with claims by US-backed NGO and far-right researcher 'led by God' against Beijing

By Ajit Singh and Max Blumenthal

Claims that China has detained millions of Uyghur Muslims are based largely on two studies. A closer look at these papers reveals US government backing, absurdly shoddy methodologies, and a rapture-ready evangelical researcher named Adrian Zenz.

THE US HOUSE of Representatives passed the Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act on December 3, legislation which calls for the Donald Trump administration to impose sanctions against China over allegations that Beijing has detained millions of Muslim-majority Uyghurs in the western region of Xinjiang.

To drum up support for the sanctions bill, Western governments and media outlets have portrayed the People's Republic as a human rights violator on par with Nazi Germany. Republican Rep. Chris Smith, for instance, denounced the Chinese government for what he called the "mass internment of millions on a scale not seen since the Holocaust," in "modern-day concentration camps."

The claim that China has detained millions of ethnic Uyghurs in its Xinjiang region is repeated with increasing frequency, but little scrutiny is ever applied. Yet a closer look at the figure and how it was obtained reveals a serious deficiency in data.

While this extraordinary claim is treated as unassailable in the West, it is, in fact, based on two highly dubious "studies."

The first, by the US government-backed Network of Chinese Human Rights Defenders, formed its estimate by interviewing a grand total of eight people.

The second study relied on flimsy media reports and speculation. It was authored by Adrian Zenz, a far-right fundamentalist Christian who opposes homosexuality and gender equality, supports "scriptural spanking" of children, and believes he is "led by God" on a "mission" against China.

As Washington ratchets up pressure on China, Zenz has been lifted out of obscurity and transformed almost overnight into a go-to pundit on Xinjiang. He has testified before Congress, providing commentary in outlets from the Wall Street Journal to Democracy Now!, and delivering expert quotes in the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists' recent "China Cables" report. His Twitter bio notes that he is "moving across the Atlantic" from his native Germany.

Before Grayzone editor Max Blumenthal questioned Zenz about his religious "mission," at a recent event about Xinjiang inside the US Capitol, he had received almost entirely uncritical promotion from Western media.

The Network of Chinese Human Rights Defenders, which first popularized the "millions detained" figure, has also been able to operate without a hint of media scrutiny.

Washington-backed NGO claims millions detained after interviewing eight people

The "millions detained" figure was first popularized by a Washington, DC-based NGO that is backed by the US government, the Network of Chinese Human Rights Defenders (CHRD).

In a 2018 report submitted to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination – often misrepresented in Western media as a UN-authored report – CHRD "estimate[d] that roughly one million members of ethnic Uyghurs have been sent to 're-education' detention camps and roughly two million have been forced to attend 're-education' programs in Xinjiang." According to CHRD, this figure was "[b]ased on interviews and limited data."

While CHRD states that it interviewed dozens of ethnic Uyghurs in the course of its study, their enormous estimate

was ultimately based on interviews with exactly ***eight Uyghur individuals***.

Based on this absurdly small sample of research subjects in an area whose total population is 20 million, CHRD "extrapolated estimates" that "at least 10% of villagers [...] are being detained in re-education detention camps, and 20% are being forced to attend day/evening re-education camps in the villages or townships, totaling 30% in both types of camps."

Applying these estimated rates to the entirety of Xinjiang, CHRD arrived at the figures submitted to the UN claiming that one million ethnic Uyghurs have been detained in "re-education detention camps" and two million more have been "forced to attend day/ evening re-education sessions".

Thanks to questionable sources like the CHRD, the United States government has accused China of "arbitrarily detain[ing] 800,000 to possibly more than two million Uighurs, ethnic Kazakhs, and other Muslims in internment camps designed to erase religious and ethnic identities."

Testifying before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in 2018, State Department official Scott Busby stated this this "is the U.S. government assessment, backed by our intelligence community and open source reporting."

The Chinese government has rejected US allegations, and claims that it has in fact established "vocational education and training centers [...] to prevent the breeding and spread of terrorism and religious extremism." The Chinese Foreign Ministry has stated that "there [are] no so-called 're-education camps' in Xinjiang at all. The vocational education and training centers legally operated in Xinjiang aim to help a small number of people affected by terrorist and extremist ideologies and equip them with skills, so that they can be self-reliant and re-integrate into society."

In its mounting pressure campaign against China, the US is not only relying on CHRD for data; it is directly funding its operations. As Ben Norton and Ajit Singh previously reported for The Grayzone, CHRD receives significant financial support from

Washington's regime-change arm, the National Endowment for Democracy (NED).

The NGO has spent years campaigning on behalf of extreme right-wing opposition figures who celebrate colonialism and call for the "Westernization" of China.

'Leading expert' on Xinjiang relies on speculation and one questionable media report

The second key source for claims that China has detained millions of Uyghur Muslims is Adrian Zenz. He is a senior fellow in China studies at the far-right Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation, which was established by the US government in 1983.

The Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation is an outgrowth of the National Captive Nations Committee, a group founded by Ukrainian nationalist Lev Dobriansky to lobby against any effort for detente with the Soviet Union. Its co-chairman, Yaroslav Stetsko, was a top leader of the fascist OUN-B militia that fought alongside Nazi Germany during its occupation of Ukraine in World War Two. Together, the two helped found the World Anti-Communist League that was described by journalist Joe Conason as "the organizational haven for neo-Nazis, fascists, and anti-Semitic extremists from two dozen countries."

Today in 1983, Vice President George Bush and UN Ambassador Jeanne Kirkpatrick keynoted an observance of the 25th annual Captive Nations Week in Washington DC attended by Yaroslav Stetsko, a war criminal and Nazi collaborator who became leader of the OUN-B in 1968.

Lev Dobriansky, pictured below with Eisenhower & Reagan, invented Captive Nations Week in 1959, and got Yaroslav Stetsko his first visa to the United States in 1958 against the wishes of the CIA & the State Department. Reagan appointed Dobriansky to be Ambassador to the Bahamas.

Today, Dobriansky's daughter, Paula, sits on the board of the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation. A former Reagan and George HW Bush official and signatory of the original Project

for a New American Century document, Paula Dobriansky has become a fixture in neoconservative circles on Capitol Hill.

From its office in Washington, the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation agitates for regime change from Venezuela to the periphery of China, advancing the "double genocide" theory that rewrites the history of the Holocaust and posits communism as a deadly evil on par with Hitlerian fascism.

Zenz's politicized research on Xinjiang and Tibet has proven one of this right-wing group's most effective weapons.

In September of 2018, Zenz wrote an article published in the Central Asian Survey journal concluding that "Xinjiang's total re-education internment figure may be estimated at just over one million." (A condensed version of the article was initially published by the Jamestown Foundation, a neoconservative think tank founded during the height of the Cold War by Reagan administration personnel with the support of then-CIA Director William J. Casey).

Like the CHRD, Zenz arrived at his estimate "over 1 million" in a dubious manner. He based it on a single report by Istiqlal TV, a Uyghur exile media organization based in Turkey, which was republished by Newsweek Japan. Far from an impartial journalistic organization, Istiqlal TV advances the separatist cause while playing host to an assortment of extremist figures.

One such character who often appears on Istiqlal TV is Abdulkadir Yapuquan, a reported leader of the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM), a separatist group that aims to establish an independent homeland in Xinjiang called East Turkestan.

ETIM has been designated as a terrorist organization with ties to al-Qaeda by the US, European Union, and UN Security Council's Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee. The Associated Press has reported that since "2013, thousands of Uighurs... have traveled to Syria to train with the Uighur militant group Turkistan Islamic Party and fight alongside al-Qaida," with "several hundred join[ing] the Islamic State."

The Turkistan Islamic Party (TIP) has been among the most recalcitrant forces operating in the Al Qaeda-controlled

Idlib province, rejecting all ceasefire efforts while indoctrinating children into militancy. TIP leadership has called on foreign Muslims to wage jihad in Syria, publishing an online recruitment video in 2018 that celebrated the 9/11 attacks as holy retaliation against a decadent United States awash in homosexuality and sin.

Children of the Turkistan Islamic Party in Idlib, Syria

According to the Los Angeles Times, Yapuquan is "a regular guest on Istiqlal TV... where his interviews often extended into hours-long emotional tirades against China."

Turkish journalist Abdullah Bozkurt reported that Istiqlal TV has also hosted fanatical anti-Semites like Nureddin Yıldız, who in an interview on the network, "called for armed jihad not only in China's autonomous Xinjiang region but all over the world and described China as a nation of savages, worse than the Jews."

Abdullah Bozkurt

in a June 26, 2017 post on Twitter, replying to a prior tweet with an excerpt of a speech by Nureddin Yıldız

"Nureddin Yıldız is linked to Jihadist groups in #Syria, inspired the assassin of #Russia ambassador in Turkey, protected by #Erdogan."

https://twitter.com/abdbozkurt/status/879444815372578816

The Istiqlal TV report relied on by Zenz published an unverified table of "re-education detainee figures" allegedly "leaked" by Chinese authorities, totaling 892,000 individuals in 68 Xinjiang counties as of Spring 2018.

Zenz pads this data by citing reports from Radio Free Asia, a US-funded news agency created by the CIA during the Cold War to propagandize against China. (The Uyghur Human Rights Act recently passed by Congress mandates the US Agency for Global Media – the governmental parent of Radio Free Asia – to report on Xinjiang, including "assessments of Chinese propaganda strategies.")

With his cobbling of questionable sources, Zenz extrapolates

an extremely broad estimate "at anywhere between several hundred thousand and just over one million."

While admitting that "there is no certainty" to his estimate, he has concluded that it is nevertheless "reasonable to speculate." He attempted to evade personal responsibility for the figure's questionable reliability, however, by stating "[t]he accuracy of this estimate is of course predicated on the supposed validity of the stated sources."

As time goes on, Zenz continues to inflate his speculative estimate of Uyghur detainees. Speaking at an event organized by the US mission in Geneva in March 2019, Zenz stated, "Although it is speculative it seems appropriate to estimate that up to 1.5 million ethnic minorities [have been detained by China in Xinjiang]." Zenz bumped up his estimate again in a November 2019 interview with Radio Free Asia, claiming China was detaining 1.8 million people.

In an interview with Der Spiegel, Zenz claimed that China has effectively outlawed the practice of Islam in Xinjiang. "Anyone in Xinjiang who engages in any type of religious practice, anyone who even has a single Koran verse saved on their mobile phone, will be subjected to a brutal process of reeducation without trial," he maintained.

These incendiary claims have vaulted Zenz to the status of international "expert" on Xinjiang, earned him invites to testify before US Congress and Canadian Parliament, and to deliver commentary in major US media outlets including The New York Times, The Washington Post, CNN, and Democracy Now!

Zenz has also been featured by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ) as the leading authority legitimizing their recent "China Cables" investigation. The ICIJ report asserts that "[l]inguists, document and Xinjiang experts, including Zenz, who reviewed the documents have expressed confidence in their authenticity."

Given Zenz's habit of speculation and the questionable reliability of the lone Istiqlal TV media report he relies on for his estimates, it is troubling that Western governments and media

have accepted and promoted his claims without a trace of skepticism.

A closer look at Zenz's own biases should magnify these concerns, as he is a full-blown evangelical End Timer who appears to be believe that God has sent him on a holy crusade against the People's Republic of China.

Fundamentalist Christian 'led by God' in mission against China, homosexuality, and gender equality

A born-again Christian who claims to preach at his local church, Adrian Zenz is a lecturer at the European School of Culture and Theology. This anodyne-sounding campus is actually the German base of Columbia International University, a US-based evangelical Christian seminary which considers the "Bible [to be] the ultimate foundation and the final truth in every aspect of our lives," and whose mission is to "educate people from a biblical worldview to impact the nations with the message of Christ."

Zenz's work on China is inspired by this biblical worldview, as he recently explained in an interview with the Wall Street Journal. "I feel very clearly led by God to do this," he said. "I can put it that way. I'm not afraid to say that. With Xinjiang, things really changed. It became like a mission, or a ministry."

Along with his "mission" against China, heavenly guidance has apparently prompted Zenz to denounce homosexuality, gender equality, and the banning of physical punishment against children as threats to Christianity.

Zenz outlined these views in a book he co-authored in 2012, titled *Worthy to Escape: Why All Believers Will Not Be Raptured Before the Tribulation*. In the tome, Zenz discussed the return of Jesus Christ, the coming wrath of God, and the rise of the Antichrist.

Zenz predicted that the future fall of capitalism will bring to power the Antichrist within a "few decades." He identified the force that "will usher the Antichrist into power" as "the economic and financial fall of 'Babylon,' with 'Babylon' symbolically representing the world's global economic system (capitalism)." "*Worthy*

to Escape: Why All Believers Will Not Be Raptured Before the Tribulation," by Adrian Zenz and Marlon L. Sias.

Along with the fall of capitalism, Zenz also views "postmodern relativism and tolerance thinking" and their apparent promotion of homosexuality, gender equality, and non-violent parenting to be threats to Christianity and "[t]he deceptive, leopard-like power behind the Antichrist."

"It is very likely that the global persecution of true believers will center on the charge that they promote 'intolerant views,'" Zenz wrote, "especially related to preaching against homosexuality."

Zenz argued that "[h]ate crime and anti-discrimination laws will likely play a major role in the suppression of biblical Christianity" and formed part of an "anti-Christian 'tolerance' campaign" because they "forbid employers to discriminate based on gender or sexual orientations."

"The outcome of this process is open rebellion against both God and God-given human authority structures", Zenz stated, decrying that "[r]ising numbers of countries are banning all forms of physical punishment of children, the primary scriptural method for instilling respect for authority in the young generation and protecting them from rebellious tendencies." Zenz assures readers that "true scriptural spanking is loving discipline and not violence."

"Another important God-given authority structure that Satan is attacking through the postmodern spirit is that of gender authority structures", Zenz continued. "Through notions of gender equality [...] the enemy is undermining God's unique but different role assignments for men and women."

Given these obscurantist right-wing views, it is not surprising that Zenz's proclaimed concern for the condition of Muslims in China does not seem to extend to Muslims elsewhere.

A search of Zenz's Twitter profile returns no tweets concerning the rise of Islamophobia in the West, nor US wars and drone strikes against Muslim-majority countries. The only Tweet by Zenz concerning Muslims that is unrelated to China is a denial that there is a double standard in how violence is judged when committed by white people compared to Muslims.

'The End Times is a very fascinating topic'

In his December 10, 2019 testimony to the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Adrian Zenz took a victory lap of sorts for Congress' passage of the Uyghur Human Rights Act the week before, which placed new sanctions on the Chinese government. Citing the bill's success, he called for opening a new front against China with a US investigation into "involuntary labor in relation to Xinjiang."

Adrian Zenz testifying before Congress on December 10, 2019

That same day, Zenz also appeared on a panel dedicated to Xinjiang that was hosted by the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation in the US Capitol Visitor Center.

On hand were Republican heavyweights like Sam Brownback, the ferociously anti-LGBT, anti-abortion former governor of Kansas and current US ambassador-at-large for religious freedom, as well as top staffers of Sen. Marco Rubio, the sponsor of virtually every China sanctions bill to be rubber-stamped by Congress in recent weeks.

Sam Brownback, a right-wing fundamentalist former senator, at the Victims of Communism panel on Xinjiang. (Zenz is second to his right).

During a question-and-answer session, The Grayzone editor Max Blumenthal asked Zenz about his fundamentalist religious views and far-right politics.

Zenz did not distance himself from his past statements denouncing gender equality and "tolerance thinking," or his advocacy for the "scriptural spanking" of children. Instead, he asserted that there was no inconsistency between those views and the quality of his research on China's Xinjiang region.

"I do have a diverse background and I have personal connections which I do not believe are inconsistent with my research," Zenz responded to Blumenthal. "I do not support China's authoritarian methods in any way, and I do believe there's a God who is bringing judgment in different forms. The End Times is a very fascinating topic, a very complex topic, and I think, very relevant. And I think it's good to live aware of that."

Moments later, a visibly upset young man rose from his seat to "condemn the tankie Max Blumenthal." Unleashing a torrent of insults at Blumenthal, he made no attempt to refute the journalist's line of questioning.

The rigorously enforced conviction on display in the politically hermetic chambers of the US Capitol also encompasses the whole of Western media, where even purportedly progressive outlets have provided Zenz with an uncritical platform.

From Washington's halls of power to major newsrooms, few are willing to let inconvenient facts get in the way of a new, undeniably faith-based Cold War crusade.

*Omitted illustrations, graphs, appendices, footnotes can be found online where this article originally appeared. See Sources of articles at the end of the book for web addresses.

Washington's war drive bumps into COVID-19

By John Catalinotto
March 16, 2020, Workers World

MARCH 15 — The Pentagon's plans to practice war conflicted with the spread of COVID-19 this week. While the virus was unable to stop all aggression from the U.S. imperialist Armed Forces, it presented an obstacle to some of the planned maneuvers.

Plans to hold war exercises called "Defender Europe 2020," which involved some 30,000 U.S. troops and 17,000 more from European NATO members, have been scaled back. These U.S. troops were to move across Europe, even as the U.S. president barred Europeans from entering the U.S.

"After careful review of the ongoing Defender-Europe 20 exercise activities and in light of the current coronavirus outbreak, we will modify the exercise by reducing the number of U.S. participants," European Command (EUCOM) officials said in a press release. (Army Times, March 11)

The exercise involved sending 20,000 U.S. troops to march through Europe to the Russian border, bringing heavy weapons and vehicles, and then return to the U.S. Some of the troops had arrived before the orders came to scale back; other U.S. troops were already in Europe. While its planners gave this exercise a harmless-sounding name, Defender Europe 2020 is an obvious threat against Russia.

Even if they fall short of provoking a war, these exercises threaten to spread COVID-19 throughout European countries as troops come into contact with civilians. Now Washington says it will no longer send the 20,000 additional troops. The war maneuver continues at a lower volume.

Another aggressive war exercise set for Norway, called "Cold Response," has been postponed due to the COVID-19 crisis.

China brings medical aid

While the U.S. is bringing weapons to Europe, including to Italy, China has brought a different kind of material to the quarantined Italian peninsula. On the morning of March 13, a team of nine experts from the People's Republic arrived at Rome's airport to assist Italy's fight against the virus. They brought with them 31 tons of medical material, mainly protective clothing and intensive care equipment, including ventilators.

China is the world's main manufacturer of surgical masks, fitted respirator masks and ventilators. While China stopped exporting these materials during the peak of COVID-19 infections in Wuhan, it is now resuming exports, and has provided aid to those countries hit hardest by COVID-19. Another two countries China has aided are Iran and Iraq.

U.S. imperialism has continued to contribute to hardships for the people in both Iran and Iraq. Washington's sanctions against Iran damage its health care system and contribute to unnecessary deaths. In Iraq this week, the U.S. carried out a rocket attack on troops connected with the Baghdad government.

COVID-19 exposes the U.S. Armed Forces

By John Catalinotto
April 6, 2020, Workers World

REPORTS in THE media this week have shown that the U.S. Armed Forces — which are the core of the imperialist state power — are far from immune to the coronavirus. Both the U.S. Army and the U.S. Navy have been hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. And the hit has political repercussions.

Not only has the pandemic affected the bodies of the troops, the reaction of the Pentagon to this threat has begun to affect their consciousness. It has exposed the dual character of the rank and file of the U.S. Armed Forces: On the one hand, obedient troops are the enforcers for the empire of capital on a global scale; on the other hand, troops who resist reveal they are workers in uniform.

On March 26 the Army Times reported: "The Army's top leaders say they are ramping up restrictions on soldiers as coronavirus cases increase across the force and internal memos acknowledge that Army policies so far have been ineffective in combating the pandemic. ... Across the force, soldiers told Army Times this week they were concerned by their commanders' decisions to continue to train and hold formations."

The Business Insider ran a more general article discussing the COVID-19 situation on bases around the world. To summarize, few steps had been taken to provide "social distancing" — soldiers and sailors live close and work close to each other — and the availability of tests was no better than for U.S. civilians. Thus the pandemic was spreading rapidly and the soldiers were worried. (For details, see tinyurl.com/uvct2ca/.)

In the Navy, the reaction of the sailors on the Aircraft Carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt was even more dramatic. The ship's captain had written a four-page letter to Navy officials, where he asked for the crew of the aircraft carrier to be evacuated and for

"decisive action" as the coronavirus spread onboard. "We are not at war," he wrote, "and therefore cannot allow a single sailor to perish as a result of this pandemic unnecessarily." (USA Today, April 3)

When Acting Navy Secretary Thomas Modly on April 2 fired Captain Brett Crozier for writing the letter — which wound up published in the San Francisco Chronicle — hundreds of sailors on board chanted "Captain Crozier! Captain Crozier!" and clapped as he left. A video on Facebook showed them cheering him.

Sailors backed his demand

It is rare that a high-ranking officer stands up to the Pentagon to defend the lower ranks of his command. What this experience shows is that the situation must have been horrible for someone so high in the chain of command to dissent. And the Pentagon's punishment of Capt. Crozier — who reportedly tested positive for COVID-19 on April 5 — pushed the sailors to take his side.

During the U.S. war against Vietnam, when there was a conscript military, the officers, from lieutenants to generals, were despised by many of the troops. The heroic Vietnamese liberation struggle for over a decade pushed the U.S. military to the breaking point. The attitude of the rank-and-file U.S. troops at that time ran the gamut from demoralized to rebellious, which led them to disrupt the U.S. occupation.

This attitude forced the Pentagon to end the draft in 1973 and orient toward a professional military. The generals did this with a vengeance, until now they have a military force half the size it was in 1973, operating high-tech heavy weapons and outsourcing logistics.

Nevertheless, even in this professional military, low-ranking troops are still workers in uniform. Their daily pressures are not that much different from the "essential workers" — packers at Amazon, supermarket clerks, truck drivers and post office workers. The troops come from the working class and 30 to 40 percent are from oppressed nationalities, concentrated in the lower ranks.

If the Army is called upon, along with the National Guard, to operate within the United States during the COVID-19 crisis, the troops will face two challenges: their own susceptibility to the virus and, should they be used not to assist the masses but for repression, their revulsion at following orders from a reactionary and unpopular national government.

It would be an error to assume that this week's reports show that a major rebellion is imminent. It would also be an error to assume that it is impossible for workers' organizations to appeal to the class interests of the rank and file in this military. A simple first step would be to support the demand for the sailors to leave their ships and for the soldiers to have all military exercises and training postponed.

The US military is hell-bent on trying to overpower China

By Vijay Prashad
May 12, 2020, Peoples Dispatch

On April 1, Admiral Philip Davidson—the head of the US Indo-Pacific Command—told the US Congress that he would like $20 billion to create a robust military cordon that runs from California to Japan and down the Pacific Rim of Asia. His proposal—titled "Regain the Advantage"—pointed to the "renewed threat we face from Great Power Competition. ... Without a valid and convincing conventional deterrent, China and Russia will be emboldened to take action in the region to supplant US interests."

The real focus is China. In January 2019, Acting US Defense Secretary Patrick Shanahan told US military officials that the problem is "China, China, China." This has been the key focus of all US President Donald Trump's nominees for the Defense Department, whether it be Shanahan or the current chief Mark Esper. Esper cannot open his mouth without blaming China; he recently told the Italian paper La Stampa that China is using the coronavirus emergency to push its advantage through "malign" forces such as Huawei and by sending aid to Italy. As far as Trump and Esper are concerned, China and—to a lesser extent—Russia are to be contained by the United States with armed force.

The Missile Gap

Senator Tom Cotton (Republican from Arkansas) has pushed the view that China's military modernization program has created a missile gap in China's favor. In March 2018, Cotton asked Admiral Harry Harris, commander of the US Pacific Command (now US ambassador to South Korea) about China's missiles. "We are at a disadvantage with regard to China today

in the sense that China has ground-based ballistic missiles that threaten our basing in the western Pacific and our ships," Harris told Congress. To remedy this, Harris suggested that the United States exit from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF), which Trump did in early 2019 (Trump blamed Russian non-compliance, but it was clear that the real target was this fear of a Chinese missile advantage). In August 2019, the US tested an intermediate-range missile, signaling that its intentions long preceded its withdrawal from the INF.

In March 2019, Cotton went to the Heritage Foundation to say that the United States should start production of medium-range ballistic missiles, which should be deployed on bases at the US territory of Guam and on the territories of US allies; these missiles should directly threaten China. "Beijing has stockpiled thousands of missiles that can target our allies, our bases, our ships, and our citizens throughout the Pacific," Cotton said in characteristic hyperbole. Exaggeration is central to people like Cotton; for them, fear-mongering is the way to produce policy, and facts are inconvenient.

The United States has used the concept of the "missile gap" before. John F. Kennedy used it for his 1958 presidential campaign, even though it is likely he knew that it was false to say that the USSR had more missiles than the United States. Little has changed since then.

In November 2018, before the US left the INF, Admiral Davidson spoke at a think tank in Washington on "China's Power." In 2015, Davidson said, his predecessor Harry Harris had joked that the islands off the coast of the People's Republic of China were a "Great Wall of Sand"; now, said Davidson, these had become a "Great Wall of SAMs," referring to Surface-to-Air Missiles. Davidson, from the military side, and Cotton, from the civilian side, began to say over and over again that China had a military advantage by the "missile gap," a concept that required no careful investigation.

The United States has the largest military force in the world. In April, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute found that the United States military budget rose by 5.3 percent over the previous year to total $732 billion; the increase over one

year was by itself the entire military budget of Germany. China, meanwhile, spent $261 billion on its military, lifting its budget by 5.1 percent. The United States has 6,185 nuclear warheads, while China has 290 nuclear warheads. Only five countries in the world have missiles that can strike any country on the earth: the United States, Russia, China, the United Kingdom, and France. Whether it be in terms of intercontinental weapons or through US air power, there is no doubt that China simply does not possess a military advantage over the United States.

Every known inventory of weapons shows that the United States has a much greater capacity to wreak havoc in a military confrontation against anyone—including China; but the US now understands that while it can bomb a country to smithereens, it can no longer subordinate all countries.

Withdrawl

The United States Navy is both overstretched and threatened. The two US Pacific-based carriers—USS Ronald Reagan and USS Theodore Roosevelt—are in trouble; USS Reagan is in Japan, where it is being repaired, while USS Roosevelt is in Guam, with its crew devastated by COVID-19. Meanwhile, the US has sent an aircraft carrier group to threaten Venezuela using the excuse of counter-narcotics. Threatening several countries far apart from each other makes it difficult for the US to focus its superior military power against any one country.

Missile capacities shown by Iran and by China have meant that the US continuous bomber presence at al-Udeid Air Base (Qatar) and at Andersen Air Force Base (Guam) has been withdrawn. These bombers are now at Minot Air Force Base (North Dakota) and Barksdale Air Force Base (Louisiana). General Timothy Ray of the US Air Force Global Strike Command put a brave face on these withdrawals, saying that it gives the US greater flexibility. The real reason for the bombers leaving Qatar and Guam is that the US military fears that these strategic assets are in harm's way.

Neither Iran nor China has the capacity to defeat the US in a military confrontation. But alongside both of their borders, Iran

and China have the capacity to strike US targets and US allies. This capacity hampers the US ability to establish the complete subordination of these countries. It is this local power developed by China and Iran that the United States wants to extinguish.

Regaining the Advantage

Admiral Davidson's April report calls for "Forward-based, rotational joint forces" as the "most credible way to demonstrate US commitment and resolve to potential adversaries." What the IndoPacific Command means is that rather than have a fixed base that is vulnerable to attack, the US will fly its bombers into bases on the soil of its allies in the Indo-Pacific network (Australia, India, and Japan) as well as others in the region (South Korea, for instance); the bombers, he suggests, will be better protected there. China will still be threatened, but Chinese missiles will—so the theory goes—find it more difficult to threaten mobile US assets.

Davidson's report has a stunning science-fiction quality to it. There is a desire for the creation of "highly survivable, precision-strike networks" that run along the Pacific Rim, including missiles of various kinds and radars in Palau, Hawaii, and in space. He asks for vast amounts of money to develop a military that is already very powerful.

Furthermore, the US is committed to the development of anti-space weapons, autonomous weapons, glide vehicles, hypersonic missiles, and offensive cyber weapons—all meant to destabilize missile defense techniques and to overpower any adversary. Such developments presage a new arms race that will be very expensive and that will further destabilize the world order.

The United States has unilaterally increased a buildup around China and has ramped up threatening rhetoric against Beijing. Anxiety about a possible war against China imposed by the United States is growing within China; although sober voices are asking the Chinese government not to get drawn into an arms race with the United States. Nonetheless, the threats

are credible, and the desire to build some form of deterrence is growing.

The absence of a strong world peace movement with the capacity to prevent this buildup by the United States is of considerable concern for the planet. The need for such a movement could not be greater.

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Corporate Media Ignore International Cooperation as Shortcut to Coronavirus Vaccine

By Joshua Cho
April 2, 2020, FAIR

When Dr. Jonas Salk was asked in a legendary interview about who owned the patent on the effective polio vaccine he and his team had developed, he acknowledged that their achievement belonged to "the people," and likened efforts to profit off their innovation to be as unethical as trying to patent the Sun (Washington Post, 3/2/20). Their story is a fitting reminder in the midst of a global coronavirus pandemic, as Salk and his team understood that universal no-cost or low-cost access to their innovation was central to their mission of eradicating the scourge of their day.

According to scientists who are closely studying the novel Covid-19 pathogen's genetic code, the coronavirus' especially slow mutation rate makes the promise of a potential vaccine especially potent. It would likely only require a single vaccine that would grant immunity for a long time—like the vaccines for measles and chickenpox—rather than requiring new vaccines every year, as do rapidly mutating viruses like the flu. When it comes to infectious diseases like Covid-19, vaccines are the strongest tools health officials have—since vaccination can potentially protect people from getting infected and limit the virus' ability to spread—making it absolutely critical that the world discovers and shares a vaccine as quickly as possible.

Yet, despite the daily exponential growth in confirmed cases, and death tolls putting the US on pace to be the epicenter of the pandemic, corporate media coverage of the global race for a coronavirus vaccine marginalizes the most effective and safe route to discovering one quickly: eschewing corporate profitability

and intellectual property rights in favor of international cooperation through open and shared, publicly funded research.

Framing the search for a coronavirus vaccine as a "global arms race," the New York Times (3/19/20) declared that "what began as a question of who would get the scientific accolades, the patents and ultimately the revenues from a successful vaccine is suddenly an issue of urgent national security." Although the Times cited several sources urging international cooperation between pharmaceutical companies and nations, the paper also suggested that the threat of nationalizing companies showing promise will "create a complication" during a time when the world is "trying to get a vaccine made as quickly as possible," implying that the most efficient way to obtain a vaccine quickly would be to incentivize pharmaceutical companies to compete with the lure of hoarding profits at the end.

The Times also spun this "scramble" as the "harsh reality" of nations being just as selfish as the US, as "any new vaccine that proves potent against the coronavirus" is "sure to be in short supply as governments try to ensure that their own people are the first in line." The Times ominously warned that nations don't want to be "beholden to a foreign power for access to the drugs that are needed in a crisis," and played into the racist trope of untrustworthy Chinese people (FAIR.org, 3/24/20) when it portrayed crucial Chinese aid to pandemic-stricken countries, which "once would have looked to Europe or the United States," as "signs" that "China is using the moment for geopolitical advantage."

While China is devoting serious efforts to find a vaccine, and has filed defensive patents (which won't be enforced if unnamed foreign companies collaborate with them) on the use of remdesivir to treat coronaviruses, it's also true that top Chinese researchers have stated that they intend to launch cooperative efforts to test overseas, if initial test results indicate that their vaccine is safe and effective. In stark contrast to reported efforts by the Trump administration to poach German pharmaceutical firm CureVac to develop a vaccine reserved for the US's exclusive use, and continued genocidal sanctions on Venezuela and Iran (FAIR.org, 2/6/19, 3/25/20; CounterSpin, 5/2/19), China has urged an end

to the US's illegal unilateral sanctions, and has delivered medical expertise and supplies across the world.

Newsweek's "China's Race for a Coronavirus Vaccine Could Produce an Unsafe Solution, Former Ambassador Warns" (3/20/20) continued corporate media's Yellow Peril coverage, reporting on former US ambassador to China Max Baucus' warning that the race for a vaccine "might lead the Chinese government to cut corners in the hunt for one":

"The big danger here is that China will move too quickly to develop a vaccine and it'll be unsafe," he said, noting this would be less likely in the US, where bodies like the Food and Drug Administration oversee generally tighter regulations. Racing to the vaccine is "a double-edged sword," Baucus added.

Any suggestion that US pharmaceutical companies might "cut corners" in their race to monopolize profits from a coronavirus vaccine was omitted by Newsweek, even though there have been prior reports (Reuters, 3/11/20; New Republic, 3/16/20) on US drugmakers skipping the animal testing phase, or proceeding simultaneously with human trials, as there are no US laws requiring them to complete testing on animals before moving onto human experiments.

This is especially dangerous, considering how rushed testing carries the risks of disease enhancement, where the vaccine could worsen, rather than protect against infection, and particularly when coronaviruses are more likely to produce this kind of response. Despite this, the New York Post (3/26/20) reported—without any pushback—that US scientists are arguing for the ability to "sidestep ethical restrictions and infect healthy people with a small amount of the Covid-19 virus to speed up the race for a vaccine."

Reports from corporate media on US pharmaceutical companies taking shortcuts in their research, along with numerous articles purporting to explain why vaccine development takes such a long time, presume that intellectual property rights are legitimate, and that there's no alternative to firms hiding their research and competing in parallel with each other.

Reporting why it will take months before a coronavirus

vaccine will be available, Business Insider (3/24/20) explained that "vaccine development is really expensive " and that it's "hard to know the return on investment for these companies," before pitching "philanthropic groups" as a potential answer. The Los Angeles Times' "Why Will It Take So Long to Make a Coronavirus Vaccine That Can Prevent Covid-19?" (3/12/20) reported that a potential vaccine could take anywhere from 12 to 18 months, noting that "the labs that create a successful vaccine probably won't be the ones that are able to scale up," and that "many companies may be wary of investing the resources it takes to manufacture a new vaccine when the epidemic could end before there's a chance to bring it to market."

The New Yorker's "How Long Will It Take to Develop a Coronavirus Vaccine?" (3/8/20) reported that a coronavirus vaccine being developed and distributed at a global scale within 12 to 18 months would be an "unprecedented, remarkable, even revolutionary achievement," as "no other vaccine has come close to being developed that quickly." Citing Rachel Grant, the advocacy and communications director for the Gates Foundation–founded Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations, the New Yorker explained:

"The resources and expertise sit in biotech and pharma, and they've got their business model," Grant said. "They're not charities. They can't do this stuff for free."

Curiously absent from all of these articles is any interrogation of a business model that involves cutting corners and endangering human life, privatizing the profits of drugs developed at public expense through patents, and making vaccines unaffordable through rampant price-gouging (FAIR.org, 4/1/20).

When corporate media aren't ignoring alternatives to profit-driven vaccine development, they run op-eds praising it as the ideal solution. Wall Street Journal editorial board member Kim Strassel (3/19/20) credited the "profit motive and competition liberals detest" for the "resourcefulness" US companies are showing during this pandemic, and had "Drug companies will save lives, even as Bernie Sanders is denouncing them" as the subhead.

Politico ran an op-ed by National Review editor Rich Lowry,

"Only the 'Crooks' of the Pharmaceutical Industry Can Save Us Now" (3/18/20), that fawned over pharmaceutical companies, claiming that they provide an "indisputable boon to public health" and "routinely create medical miracles for which we all should be grateful." Trying to justify patents, Lowry argued that they "ensure that companies get the benefit of research that is expensive, time-consuming and risky," and asserted that if corporations don't have intellectual property protections to reap "market benefits," then much of their "research would dry up."

But as economist Mariana Mazzucato (Guardian, 3/18/20) has pointed out, the US government invests more than $40 billion a year in health R&D used by pharmaceutical companies through the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and has spent around $700 million on coronavirus research, more than any other country. Until 1995, the NIH actually had the authority to require companies to make drugs based on public research available at reasonable prices (Intercept, 3/2/20). But when amendments to restore the authority were brought to the Senate in 2000, then-Sen. Joe Biden—the presidential candidate who has received the most money from the pharmaceutical industry this election cycle—was one of eight Democrats who voted with Republicans to kill the amendment (Sludge, 3/17/20).

Remdesivir, the only drug the World Health Organization thinks may have "real efficacy" in treating coronavirus, was actually developed in partnership with the public University of Alabama with a grant from the NIH, despite being monopolized by Gilead Sciences (Intercept, 3/23/20). Hence Mazucatto argues that coronavirus vaccines and treatments developed with taxpayer money should be produced "without giving an exclusive license to private manufacturers."

Critics of market-driven health R&D also include people like Bill Gates and Dr. Peter Hotez, who testified that he and his team had developed a promising SARS coronavirus vaccine that could've been used to speed up research for Covid-19—or possibly provide cross-protection—but couldn't test it on humans due to a lack of funding, as corporations have little financial incentive in pursuing preventive vaccines.

Economist Dean Baker (Beat the Press, 3/12/20) has also

pointed out the moral and utilitarian absurdities of intellectual property rights, especially during a pandemic. He argues (Truthout, 3/2/20) that patents are actually slowing the development of a coronavirus vaccine, due to inefficient redundancies and inevitable waste resulting from secretive competition:

It's likely that any vaccine that is developed will be relatively cheap to manufacture and distribute. If it is expensive, it will only be because the government will arrest anyone who produces the vaccine in competition with the patent holder. It is the government-granted monopoly that would make a vaccine expensive, not anything inherent to the production process or the normal workings of the market....

We have people around the world working as fast as they can to try to develop an effective vaccine against this dangerous disease. That is great—except these people are working in competition, not in collaboration. They all want to be the first to develop a patentable vaccine that will allow them to get very rich if it proves successful. Imagine how much faster the research would advance if these researchers were working in collaboration, sharing their results with each other, and posting them on the web so that researchers throughout the world could learn from them.

A coronavirus vaccine could be developed under the precedent set by the collaborative Human Genome Project, where research was shared as soon as possible, because mapping the human genome was considered a common project that would benefit all humanity. Especially when a Trump administration official like Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar rejects the notion that coronavirus treatments and vaccines should be affordable to everyone (Intercept, 3/19/20), and when industry lobbyists remove language threatening intellectual property rights from a coronavirus spending package (Intercept, 3/12/20), there needs to be pressure on the government to use all its power to make a coronavirus vaccine accessible to anyone who needs it.

Pivot to Peace must replace US Pivot to War with China

By Kevin Zeese and Margaret Flowers
May 10, 2020, Popular Resistance

THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION, in seeking to divert attention from its bungled response to the COVID-19 pandemic and mishandling of the economic collapse, is escalating the bipartisan anti-China policy, which has a long history. This increases the potential of military conflict and economic war between our countries.

President Trump is making both a global depression and war more likely. The United States needs to de-escalate its conflicts and work with China and other countries to confront the pandemic and economic collapse, as well as the climate crisis and nuclear proliferation. This is not the time for escalation of conflicts, but for de-escalation and a new era of a multipolar and cooperative world.

Bipartisan Escalation Against China Is Longterm US Policy

While some blame Trump for the escalation of conflict with China, in this century, it began with President Obama's pivot to Asia. It now includes a full spectrum dominance strategy of military, information, and economic aggression.

The roots of treating the Asian Pacific as a 'US lake,' just as Latin America is 'our backyard,' go back to 1878 when Navy Commodore Robert W. Shufeldt of the USS Ticonderoga described the Pacific as "the ocean bride of America." Declaring a Monroe Doctrine for the Pacific, he described Asia as where the "search for Empire ceases and human power attains its climax." Interestingly, it was the Panic of 1873 that led to a depression that resulted in a search for new markets. The US failed its invasion of Korea in 1871 and Shufeldt needed to improve US relations.

In 1882, his mission resulted in the first treaty in the Pacific Rim signed by the US and South Korea.

Today's economic collapse is a major reason for Trump's escalation with China but Trump is building on the policies of Barack Obama who declared himself the "first Pacific president" as part of a geopolitical strategy to challenge China. His Secretary of State Hillary Clinton wrote "America's Pacific Century" that claimed the future will be decided in Asia and the US will be right at the center of the action. They put in place the Asian Pivot, an escalation of military confrontation with China with 60 percent of US war capacity shifting to the Pacific.

The US was already at war with China before Donald Trump entered the Oval Office. The US military and other branches of government were gearing up for a long-term conflict, involving both economic and diplomatic pressure on China with a buildup of military forces along the country's periphery. Last Thursday, on Flashpoints on KPFA, KJ Noh pointed out that the Pivot came with the Air-Sea Battle War Doctrine designed to ensure the US maintained freedom of action throughout the globe. The US built a networked land, sea, air, space, and cyber collective warfighting capability with allied countries.

In 2011, the Council of Foreign Relations began urging the US to withdraw from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty. The RAND Corporation, which advises the US military, published "Thinking through the unthinkable" in 2016. It described how the US could win a war with China, which it argued the US needs to do before 2025. The strategy is to focus on the South China Sea in a long and costly way that cuts off Chinese fuel supplies and trade. Almost a decade ago, military strategists James Holmes and Toshi Yoshihara found the First Island Chain was a natural barrier that could bottle-up the Chinese Navy.

RAND urged the US to void the INF Treaty so missiles could be directed at China. In 2018, Trump declared–as if on his own volition–the US would drop out of the INF Treaty. The US falsely claimed Russian had violated the treaty, but it was really about targeting China. In August 2019, the US withdrew from the treaty and started developing new missiles. The US then conducted the first test launch of a new ground-launched cruise missile.

The US has also been expanding military bases and military agreements in the Pacific. In September 2019, Secretary of Defense Mark Esper called for further expanding military base locations in the Pacific region while speaking at the Naval War College, calling the Indo-Pacific "our priority theatre." Esper believes "The United States network of alliances and partnerships provides us an asymmetric strategic edge that our adversaries cannot match."

The hybrid war against China includes an information war as well as economic conflict. Just before the novel coronavirus pandemic, the propaganda war was most evident around the Hong Kong protests and the disinformation campaign about the Uyghurs. The US has been funding anti-China activities in Hong Kong since 1996. People have mistakenly called the anti-China protests 'democracy protests'. While there was confusion about the protests, it is obvious when they called for "Trump to Save Us" and worked with right-wing anti-China senators that Hong Kong is part of Washington's anti-China strategy. The US passed the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act, which the US will use to justify intruding into the internal affairs of China and Hong Kong.

Similarly, reports based on dubious studies claimed mass imprisonment of millions of Muslim Uyghurs, or even that there is a Muslim Holocaust in China. These were vast exaggerations used to stoke anti-China views. The US has long backed the World Uyghur Congress as part of its effort to undermine China from within. A small minority of poor, radicalized Uyghurs, who have been involved in terrorism and violence in China and have also fought with ISIS in Syria, are a problem for China. People who visited the region and reported on the Uyghurs describe what we are hearing as 'shameful lies' peddled by the US empire.

Under Obama, economic domination involved the largest corporate trade agreement in history, the Trans-Pacific Partnership. The TPP included the United States and 11 Pacific Rim countries, excluding the largest economy in the hemisphere, China. It was designed to ensure US hegemony in the Asia Pacific through corporate dollar domination. Popular Resistance helped organize a five-year 'movement of movements' campaign

that stopped the TPP. This defeat was seen as the beginning of the end of US hegemony in Asia.

But, the defeat of the TPP did not stop the US' focus on Asia. In 2018, the United States announced a new national defense strategy, "Great Power Conflict," with China as the top target. Around the same time, the Nuclear Posture Review announced the escalation of nuclear weapons development, which also started under Obama. The new arms race also includes space, traditional weapons, cyber defense, and surveillance.

The US fears the 21st Century will be the Chinese Century and is doing all it can to prevent that development. This has resulted in a bipartisan policy of militarily surrounding China with nuclear and other weapons.

The Trump COVID Escalation

The Trump administration is now using the novel coronavirus to escalate opposition to China. This includes a propaganda offensive that is becoming a Chinese version of Russiagate. The Trump administration made a point to call it the "Chinese" or "Wuhan virus" until it was told this was an inaccurate description as we still do not know where it began. The propaganda continues with claims that China was not transparent, is hiding the number of deaths, punished doctors who discussed the issue, and leaked or manipulated the virus.

A thorough reality check of these claims has shown them to be false but they have built hatred for China, resulting in prejudice against Asian people and laying the groundwork for escalation. Now Trump and Biden are accusing each other of being soft on China. Biden accuses Trump of not holding China accountable while Trump is seeking to use China as a scapegoat for his failed response to the virus. Fearmongering is being used to justify escalating the economic and military conflict with China.

The reality is China had a rapid, breathtaking, and impressive response to the virus that bought countries time to respond and won praise from health experts. China allowed public health officials to examine its response, independently confirming its successful response. China's approach provides other nations

with lessons they can learn to combat the virus. In addition, China is providing assistance to nations throughout the globe to help them respond to the pandemic. Indeed, while countries received little or no help from the European Union and the United States, China along with Cuba provided aid to them.

Last month, China's top intelligence ministry, the Ministry of State Security, presented a report by China's Institutes of Contemporary International Relations to top Beijing leaders that warned China needs to be prepared in a worst-case scenario for an armed confrontation with the United States. This risk comes from the backlash against China over the pandemic.

This week, Reuters reported the US is investing heavily in weapons for use against China. Budget documents show the Marines sought $125 million to buy 48 Tomahawk missiles next year and $3.2 billion for hypersonic technology, mostly for research on new, long-range missiles. The Pentagon also seeks $224 million for another 53 new Long Range Anti-Ship Missiles in 2021. They expect to have more than 400 of them in service by 2025. These will be used on Navy Super Hornet jets and Air Force B-1 bombers.

Testimony also reported the Marines had successfully tested new shorter-range anti-ship weapons, the Naval Strike Missile. Reuters reports "in a radical shift in tactics, the Marines will join forces with the US Navy in attacking an enemy's warships. Small and mobile units of US Marines armed with anti-ship missiles will become ship killers." These would be dispersed at key points in the Western Pacific and along the First Island Chain.

China has urged the US to stop "moving around the chess pieces" in the Asia Pacific. A Chinese military spokesman, Senior Colonel Wu Qian, warned last October that Beijing would "not stand by" if Washington deployed land-based, long-range missiles in the Asia-Pacific. The US moves are leading to an arms race in the Asia Pacific. Reuters has published a series on China's military that revealed in most categories, China's missiles now rival or outperform US counterparts.

In addition to these plans, the US has already increased military activity in the Asia Pacific. The South China Morning Post reported on May 10, that the US increased military operations

in waters close to China. This has included 39 flights over the South China Sea, East China Sea, Yellow Sea, and the Taiwan Strait, more than three times the number carried out in 2019. The US Navy also conducted four so-called freedom of navigation operations in the South China Sea in the first four months of 2020 – compared with just eight for all of 2019.

A conflict between the United States and China presents a risk of global warfare as the US has directed NATO to focus on China and has been building military relations in the Asia Pacific, especially with its closest military ally, Japan. China has also built relationships with numerous countries including Russia. The United States has been increasing military spending in the region while Russia and China have responded with the development of new weapons and also increased spending. The Pentagon is planning for a new long war with China and Russia.

Rather than a national security strategy of major power conflict, the US needs a strategy of major power cooperation. The United Nations has called for international cooperation and a global ceasefire, which the US blocked this week.

People need to promote and work toward peace as a top priority as the risk of conflict escalates. We urge you to sign onto Peace Pivot where you can find more information on the conflict between China and the US and what you can do about it. US elected officials should not be rewarded for China-bashing. We must work together to call out the falsehoods about China so that doing so backfires against the politicians who make them.

China's rise from poverty to becoming an engine for the global economy should not be seen as a threat to the United States. China's Belt and Road Initiative can help all nations. If the United States responds with an escalation of economic and military conflict it will undermine US leadership and bring greater insecurity to the world. The US must work with China, and other nations in this new multipolar world to stop the pandemic, economic collapse, climate catastrophe, and the risk of nuclear war.

*Omitted illustrations, graphs, appendices, footnotes can be found online where this article originally appeared. See Sources of articles at the end of the book for web addresses.

Trump wins! Completing Obama's Pivot to Asia and the Confrontation with China

By Ajamu Baraka
May 13, 2020, Black Agenda Report

THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION is determined to "put China in its place," a white supremacist mindset that will inevitably lead to monumental errors of judgement.

"U.S. policymakers are openly advocating war with China."

Even before becoming the 45th president of the United States, Donald Trump had one consistent foreign enemy – China. Partly fueled by his intrinsic white supremacy and his antipathy for the liberal elite "globalists" who evoked his personal inferiority complex, Trump has never wavered from his fierce opposition to what he saw as the "yellow peril" from China.

So when the Obama Administration announced in 2011 that the US would make "a strategic pivot" in its foreign policy to focus its military and political attention on the Asia-Pacific, particularly Southeast Asia, which meant China, it was one time that Trump supported Obama's position – but for very different reasons.

For Trump, the problem was the cozy relationship between finance capital and the transnational corporations they funded during the neoliberal period of rapid and deepening globalization of production. The result of that relationship was that much of the industrial base of the U.S. economy was transferred first to Mexico and then mainland China. Altering that relationship and bringing those jobs "back home" as part of his "America first" position became a campaign issue and his intended first order of business once he assumed the presidency. Shifting trade relations in favor of his capitalist base in the U.S. was a primary

objective, with Chinese containment being a necessary but almost secondary objective.

"It was one time that Trump supported Obama's position."

Trump's opposition to the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), the "gold standard of trade deals" according to Hilary Clinton before she pretended to oppose the treaty during her 2016 campaign, was seen by the elite as the signature deal that would provide the leverage to contain China's ambitions in the Asia-Pacific region and globally, while also ensuring the continuity of economic relationships for U.S. transnational capital to utilize China as a profitable zone for the production of goods and services for the U.S. and European markets.

Trump's opposition to the TPP and his comments regarding the entire architecture of the global neoliberal project of the last forty was seen as reckless and made him a threat. The financial and corporate transnational elite moved swiftly operating though the state and media to destabilize his administration, even before he took office. That fraction couldn't care less about his rhetoric on race, Muslims and immigration, in fact his theatrics became a very valuable distraction while they completed the strengthening of the national security state under Bush and Obama and plotted to either get rid of Trump or impose the discipline of their agenda on his administration.

"The financial and corporate transnational elite moved swiftly to destabilize his administration."

As Trump saw it, completing the pivot to Asia required one strategic angle – reducing tensions with Russia with the intent to bring them into the fold of "Europe" in order for the U.S. and Europe to combine forces to discipline China. What Trump hadn't anticipated and was clearly unprepared for, was the ferocity of the efforts to make it impossible for him to govern. Russiagate became the issue that would block his plan to reconcile with Russia and bring the full force of the state against China.

But, today, after having survived the most unprecedented efforts by unelected power to undermine his presidency -- perhaps in the history of the U.S. nation/state short of actual assassination -- Trump has the support of a growing coalition of forces across the ruling class spectrum that represent a new and growing consensus that China is out of control and is a real threat to U.S. global hegemony.

What changed?

Limiting China to a specific role in the international division of labor was always part of the plan even when China received "most favored Nations status" in the 90s and membership in the World trade Organization.

"Trump has the support of a growing consensus that China is out of control."

The relationship between U.S. transnational capital and the Chinese state was seen as a win-win. China served as platform to produce goods and services for U.S. markets providing jobs for Chinese labor and revenue for the state while providing price competitive products for U.S. consumers. In the process it was assumed that China's integration and participation in the global capitalist order would result in the "liberalization" of their economy and political system and open up an enormous new market for U.S. capital.

The problem of course was that the Chinese had their own plans.

The new bipartisan, ruling class consensus that more aggressive measures were needed to contain China was captured in the now infamous "pivot to Asia" announced by Barack Obama in 2011.

Today the growing ruling class consensus that has given new life to Trump's anti-China campaign is reflected in the positions that say economic integration with China did not result in any transformation of China into a "regular" capitalist nation. And with the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) introduced by Chinese president Xi Jinping, China is an existential threat that can only be countered by military means.

War Against China, COVID-19, and Black Working-Class Position

The psychopathology of white supremacy blinds U.S. policy-makers to the political, economic, and geopolitical reality that the U.S. is in irreversible decline as a global power. The deep structural contradictions of the U.S. economy and state was exposed by the weak and confused response to COVID-19 and the inability of the state to provide minimum protections for its citizens and residents. But even in decline, the U.S. has a vast military structure that it can use to threaten and cause massive death and destruction.

This makes the U.S. a threat to the planet and collective humanity because U.S policy-makers appear to be in the grip of a death-wish in which they are prepared to destroy the world before voluntarily relinquishing power, especially to a non-European power like China.

For example, when Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo declared in public that the United States and its Western European allies must put China in "its proper place," this represents a white supremacist mindset that inevitably will lead to monumental errors of judgement.

"U.S. policy-makers appear to be prepared to destroy the world before voluntarily relinquishing power."

This white supremacist, colonialist mentality is unable to accept the full and equal humanity of non-Europeans and, therefore, are driven to an irrational obsession with preventing what is now inevitable – global hegemony passing to China.

To prevent this objective eventuality, U.S. policymakers are openly advocating war with China. Not only war, but a war that some of them argue must take place before 2025!

And this is not some wild construction from the Trump Administration.

More than a decade ago military strategists war-gamed on how to defeat the Chinese concentrating on fuel supplies and trade routes. The RAND Corporation described during the Obama Administration how the U.S. could defeat China in a conventional war and in 2011, the Council of Foreign Relations

began to urge the U.S. to withdraw from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty which it did in 2019 in order to redeploy intermediate range missiles off the coast of China.

COVID-19, that the Trump Administration constantly refers to as the Chinese virus, and the blame game being played, is preparing the public to support conflict with China.

However, The Chinese are aware of the dangerous turn of events with COVID-19 and are preparing accordingly. And here is the real danger. Forces within the Chinese Communist Party and military are warning that the nation must prepare itself for all contingencies, including armed conflict.

"The COVID-19 blame game is preparing the public to support conflict with China."

For African Americans we must resist all efforts to draw us into a conflict that has nothing to do with us. We must be clear that we are not going to allow our sons and daughters to be sacrificed in yet another war of aggression on behalf of white capitalist/colonial power.

We must reject anti-China propaganda being directed at our communities using lurid stories of Chinese anti-black racism in China and the alleged attempts by the Chinese to "colonize" Africa, a position that is both absurd and insulting in how it trivializing the brutal reality of European colonization that the continent has yet to recovery from.

Trump is winning the propaganda war on the Chinese issue because at its core the U.S. is susceptible to appeals to crossclass white racial solidarity against the uncivilized hordes. Samuel Huntington "Clash of Civilizations" did not just resonate with right-wing audiences but was an acceptable commentary on the challenges of Western modernity.

However, we must remain clear about who our enemy is. It is not the Chinese who are beating us down in the streets for not social distancing, who have denied us medical care, imprisoned us, killed us, poisoned our water, and forced us to face death on a job just to survive. We got a historical beef, but it ain't with China, Russia, or any of the enemies of the U.S.

Hong Kong's 'pro-democracy' movement allies with far-right US politicians that seek to crush Black Lives Matter

By Ajit Singh
June 9, 2020, The Grayzone

As a Hong Kong protest leader promotes far-right condemnations of US anti-racism demonstrations and activists shut down a Black Lives Matter rally in the city, Hong Kong organizers forge close ties with hardline Republicans in Washington.

A LEADING Hong Kong "pro-democracy" figure, Jimmy Lai, has denounced nationwide protests in the United States against police brutality and systemic racism, which were sparked by the police killing of an African-American man, George Floyd. Lai's views reflect a significant segment of the city's protest movement, who affirm the exceptionalist myth of the US as a beacon of "freedom and democracy."

Hong Kong's "pro-democracy" activists have gone so far as to derail the efforts of an African-American woman who attempted to organize a Black Lives Matter demonstration in the city, accusing her of being an agent of the police and Communist Party of China.

Meanwhile, some leaders of Hong Kong's anti-Beijing opposition, such as Joshua Wong, have claimed to support the US protests and Black Lives Matter. However, these expressions of "solidarity" ring hollow, given that, like Lai, these "pro-democracy" leaders have also forged an alliance with the very US state and far-right politicians who have demonized and sought to brutally repress American protesters. In fact, Wong and his

comrades have carefully avoided making any specific criticism of President Trump or any of their other sponsors in Washington.

Lai's comments and the duplicity of Hong Kong's "pro-democracy" opposition, once again highlight the inconvenient truths of this movement that many in the West have insisted is progressive. Although some have tried to equate Hong Kong's "pro-democracy" movement with Black Lives Matter, they are, in fact, on opposite ends of the political spectrum.

Hong Kong "pro-democracy" leader denounces George Floyd protests

As Dan Cohen reported for The Grayzone, Jimmy Lai is a billionaire media tycoon widely referred to as "the Rupert Murdoch of Asia" who is a major financial and media backer of Hong Kong's protest movement.

In addition to pouring millions of dollars into Hong Kong's opposition in recent years, the self-described "head of opposition media" and founder of the anti-government Apple Daily tabloid has provided protesters with "unswervingly favorable coverage," according to The New York Times.

Lai has received glowing coverage in the US and Western media, with the oligarch often being praised as a "'troublemaker' with a clean conscience" who is "standing up to China."

On June 2, Lai shared a video by Avi Yemini, a far-right YouTube personality and former Israeli army soldier, declaring that it was "bloody disgraceful" to liken the "riots in America" with Hong Kong's protest movement.

In the video, Yemini rattled off right-wing talking points, referring to the anti-racist protesters as "antifa extremists" who are "destroying everything that is American, in fact, everything that Hong Kongers are fighting to obtain."

Lai expressed his gratitude to Yemini, writing "thank you for speaking up for us #HKers."

According to the Australian Jewish Democratic Society, Yemini has formed extensive ties to neo-Nazis such as the Soldiers of Odin and fascist agitators like Milo Yiannopoulis.

A few days earlier, Lai, who has met repeatedly with Trump administration brass, told CNN that "only Trump can save Hong Kong."

Lai then reiterated his call for President Trump's support mere hours after the president threatened to have the US military shoot George Floyd protesters.

The sentiment was unsurprising, considering that much of the protest movement in Hong Kong has lionized Washington, upholding the US government and President Trump as their "liberators."

For years, leaders of Hong Kong's opposition have met and strategized with US government officials and politicians, most frequently those on the far-right.

Indeed, Lai's views on the George Floyd protests appear to reflect those of a significant segment of Hong Kong's "pro-democracy" movement, to the dismay of those who argue that the movement is "progressive."

The Lausan Collective, a self-described "decolonial left" English-language publication founded by staunch supporters of the Hong Kong protests, lamented that "some Hongkongers have refused to stand with Black Lives Matter" urging their comrades to support protests taking place in the US.

Wilfred Chan, a New York-based contributing writer for The Nation and founding member of Lausan, expressed frustration at the prevalence of such views.

In a June 2 tweet, Chan wrote that "every other hongkonger [sic]" on LIHKG (a popular online platform among Hong Kong's protest movement that has been called "Hong Kong's Reddit"), "is suddenly an expert on the american [sic] criminal justice system and also believe the only reason anyone could be critical of trump [sic] is because they're an agent of the [Communist Party of China]".

Examples of this have surfaced on Twitter, with vocal supporters of the Hong Kong protests claiming that the Communist Party of China is behind Black Lives Matter, comparing Black protesters to gorillas, and claiming that the "real America"

consists of Black people who are looters and white people who clean up after them.

Racist and nativist undercurrents have been present throughout the Hong Kong protests. Although this has primarily been directed towards mainland Chinese, anti-Black racism has also previously erupted during the protests.

Following NBA superstar LeBron James' refusal to declare support for the movement, intense backlash swept across the city with protesters trampling on and burning the basketball icon's jerseys.

In one gathering, hundreds of angry protesters appear to have chanted racial slurs directed at James, with the Associated Press reporting that the chant "wasn't printable."

Hong Kong "pro-democracy" activists shut down Black Lives Matter rally

Hong Kong "pro-democracy" activists have gone so far as to derail the efforts to organize a Black Lives Matter rally in the city following the killing of George Floyd.

In a letter shared with the Hong Kong Free Press, event organizer Jayne Jeje, an African-American woman who has lived in Hong Kong for eight years, outlined the harassment she received that led to her cancelling the event.

According to Jeje, "pro-democracy" activists accused her of "working with the police to entrap people" and "being backed by the CCP [Communist Party of China]." On the social media event page for the rally, Jeje wrote that she was bombarded with "attacks" and hostile comments consisting of "mistruths, bullying, accusations, and profanity."

Jeje wrote that she was accused of having "expat privilege," grilled about "why the event was only about BLM, since HK lives matter too." More concerned with co-opting the event to advance their own agenda than demonstrating solidarity, Hong Kong "pro-democracy" activists told Jeje that she "[did not] have the right to comment on BLM" unless she made the Hong Kong protests a focus of the event.

In this vein, Hong Kong protesters have recently appropriated the slogans "I can't breathe" and "Black Lives Matter" for their own demonstrations.

Ultimately, due to this harassment and fear that "pro-democracy" activists would sabotage the event, Jeje and the other event organizers chose to cancel the Black Lives Matter rally.

"[We] made the painful decision to cancel the event, based on angry messages that we were cooperating with the police, or not including their issues or responding to their demands" wrote Jeje. "We feared they would come and purposefully ruin the event."

Hong Kong's opposition aligned with same far-right US politicians repressing Black Lives Matter

There are some within Hong Kong's "pro-democracy" movement who have issued statements expressing support for the protests taking place in the US and the Black Lives Matter movement, arguing that both movements are engaged in a shared struggle against oppression and police brutality.

Joshua Wong, a poster-boy for the Hong Kong protests, along with Nathan Law and other leading members of his political party, Demosistō, have stated that they stand with Black Lives Matter. "Many of you have asked me about the ongoing U.S. protests" wrote Wong in a June 2 tweet. "As a human-rights activist, I stand firmly on the side of the #BlackLivesMatter movement and oppose police brutality, wherever it may be."

Although he had never mentioned Black Lives Matter prior to this tweet, Wong has now claimed that both he and Hong Kong's protesters have long stood in solidarity with the movement. "Time and again, we see how people fighting oppression in Hong Kong continue to stand with people fighting oppression in the United States. #BlackLivesMatter," Wong wrote in a June 4 tweet, sharing an image of a Hong Kong protester holding a sign which read "I CAN'T BREATHE."

In calling for solidarity between the two movements, Lausan argued that they "both stem from the same system of state

violence and oppression" and are connected by "similarly being victims of police brutality."

However, what Joshua Wong and other Hong Kong "pro-democracy" leaders, along with "left-wing" supporters like Lausan, omit from their pronouncements of "solidarity" with Black Lives Matter is that their movement's principal ally is the very US state which is brutally repressing American protesters fighting for racial justice.

Leaders of Hong Kong's opposition like Wong have spent years cultivating close relationships some of the most hawkish figures in Washington. Their most vociferous allies include far-right Republican Senators Ted Cruz, Josh Hawley, Marco Rubio, and Rick Scott, and Tom Cotton, who recently called for a US military crackdown on Black Lives Matter protests.

Their expressly stated goal, as spelled out by a US-based lobbying firm, is to advance their movement against the Chinese government and "preserve the US's own political and economic interests in Hong Kong."

Given their open alliance with the very politicians who have demonized US protesters as "looters" and "antifa terrorists", doxxed protesters, claimed that the Venezuelan government is behind the demonstrations, and made fascistic calls for the military to impose martial law, the expressions of support for Black Lives Matter by leaders of Hong Kong's "pro-democracy" movement ring hollow.

It is no coincidence that the statements by Wong and his comrades do not mention, let alone criticize, their far-right sponsors in Washington. In fact, just days prior to his pronouncement of solidarity with Black Lives Matter, Wong sent birthday wishes to Senator Rubio.

These alliances highlight the superficiality of the "solidarity" of Hong Kong's opposition with Black Lives Matter and reflect the fundamental political differences between the two movements.

In stark contrast to the Black Lives Matter movement, which has called into question the racial oppression that undergirds the American political system, the Hong Kong protesters have proudly affirmed an exceptionalist, whitewashed notion of the US

as a beacon of "freedom and democracy," adorning themselves in the stars and stripes and belting out the Star-Spangled Banner while beseeching the US to police the Asian Pacific region.

Whereas Black Lives Matter has inspired a global reckoning with US and European legacies of slavery and colonialism, Hong Kong's "pro-democracy" movement is inspired by the city's former British colonial masters.

In recent days, the Black Lives Matter movement has been terrorized by white vigilante groups. Meanwhile, Hong Kong's "pro-democracy" protests have served as a magnet for the US and European far-right supporters.

The ultra-right pilgrimages to Hong Kong have included numerous American white nationalists and Ukrainian neo-Nazis who previously fought in the fascist paramilitary group, Azov Battalion.

The interest has been mutual, with Hong Kong's "democrats" drawing inspiration from Ukraine's pro-Western Euromaidan "revolution" that has empowered far-right, fascistic forces.

Hong Kong protesters have even embraced the slogan "Glory to Hong Kong", adapted from "Slava Ukrayini" or "Glory to Ukraine", a slogan invented by Ukrainian fascists and used by Nazi collaborators during WWII that was re-popularized by the Euromaidan movement.

"No matter the differences between Ukraine and Hong Kong, our fights for freedom and democracy are the same," Joshua Wong told The Kyiv Post in 2019. "[W]e have to learn from Ukrainians... and show solidarity. Ukraine confronted the force of Russia — we are facing the force of Beijing."

Despite attempts to equate their experiences, both movements have faced radically different police responses. US police have killed at least three protesters in the past several days and imposed harsh curfews, while the Trump administration has threatened to send in the military to quash the uprising.

Yet after a year of protests in Hong Kong — during which time protesters have harassed and taken journalists hostage, ganged up on and beaten countless defenseless individuals, burned people alive, and murdered an elderly street cleaner by

throwing a brick at his head — police have yet to kill a single protester or impose any curfew in the city.

This is in spite of the fact that Hong Kong's protesters have explicitly aimed to use aggressive provocations to "get the police to hit [them]" to win international sympathy, including hurling bricks, gasoline bombs, and flaming arrows at officers.

In fact, the Chinese army has never been deployed to protests, except when soldiers left their barracks on one occasion, unarmed and dressed in shorts and t-shirts, to clean debris left on the streets.

It is clear that Hong Kong's "pro-democracy" movement and Black Lives Matter are separate movements with radically different political ideologies and aims.

With the US establishment united in its new Cold War strategy against China, Joshua Wong and Hong Kong's anti-Beijing opposition are well aware that bipartisan support for their movement is secure. If their statements of "solidarity" with protests taking place in the US represent anything, it is a desperate desire to avoid being tarnished any further by the close alliances they have forged with pro-police hardliners in Washington.

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Agents of Chaos

How the U.S. Seeded a Colour Revolution in Hong Kong

By Laura Ru
May 25, The Medium

IF TWENTY YEARS ago someone had predicted a colour revolution in Hong Kong, most political analysts would have laughed. Not because colour revolutions are laughable — their tragic consequences can hardly be laughed off — but because they tend to occur in target states with weak governance at the periphery of transnational networks. Hong Kong, on the other hand, is one of the top 3 global financial hubs, following New York and London, and right at the centre of those networks. Though Hong Kong, a special administrative region of China, didn't apparently fit the profile of a weak target ripe for regime change, the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) and other notorious sponsors of colour revolutions had already set their eyes on the territory even before 1997, when its sovereignty returned to China. As China's economic growth rates made the headlines in the 1990s, "China's threat" arguments started to appear in the US mainstream media and foreign affairs analysts began to cast China as the "new red peril", a potential challenge to the U.S.' global supremacy.

Although two decades ago the trade war hadn't broken out yet, anyone looking at the bigger, geopolitical picture could see black clouds gathering.

In this article I will try to explain why the territory, situated at the periphery of China, like Tibet and Xinjiang, was actually a softer target than either of them for those striving to destabilize China. I will also outline some of the strategies used by agents of regime change to prepare the ground for both the 2014 Umbrella Movement and 2019 riots that rocked Hong Kong.

ON THE SURFACE, post-reunification Hong Kong was running extremely well, but if one scratched the glossy surface typically

associated with an international business and financial centre, one could immediately see that this efficiency masked much deeper problems. Hong Kong certainly had good administrators, but not many who could truly govern a city that was still politically immature due to its colonial legacy and dominated by vested interests and cartels. The One Country Two Systems experimental model was still being fine-tuned and little progress had been made towards the decolonization of Hong Kong's institutions and, most crucially, its people's minds. By all appearances, the process of creating a sense of identification with, and loyalty to, China was still in its infancy. In contrast, transnational actors, most notably churches, NGOs and advocacy networks regarded by the US as "vectors of influence" and "catalysts of democratization" were well-entrenched in the Hong Kong civil society. Working in concert with US-sponsored local media and pro-democracy parties they subjected both China and the local government to constant criticism, exploiting domestic grievances in order to deepen rifts in society and achieve the sort of partisan and ideological polarization that would make Hong Kong ungovernable.

If the local government had acknowledged and defined the risks, it would have been able to recognize a pattern in a seemingly random set of events. All it had to do was gather intelligence and match the information received with what was already known about colour revolutions and their genesis.

Regrettably the Hong Kong government was too busy reassuring opposition parties (whose allegiance to the U.S. is no mystery) and that imaginary entity known as the 'international community', that China was not undermining Hong Kong's autonomy, to actually notice the big elephant in the room.

Hong Kong lawmakers failed to acknowledge that the political feasibility of One Country Two Systems ultimately rests on the stability of One Country, without which any talk of Two Systems becomes preposterous. System stability is never a given, equilibrium must be maintained through a balance of forces. So, when foreign players started coordinating campaigns aimed at shaking the foundations of this constitutional arrangement and hindering the process of Hong Kong's re-absorption into China's

sphere of governance, the defense of China's sovereignty should have taken precedence over other considerations. The 'do less, get less wrong' mentality often displayed by civil servants and lawmakers made them ill-prepared to resolve serious crises and tackle social problems. Most notably, their hands-off approach created a dangerous vacuum that could easily be filled by subversive elements and groups with proven ties to the U.S. government.

Anyone familiar with colour revolutions would have recognized the pattern that was already emerging in campaigns aimed at discrediting both the central and Hong Kong government. The process of ideological subversion is always underpinned by a slow penetration into the institutions of a target country, fractious opposition parties magically form a united front, a small army of local volunteers and foreign agents co-operate to promote what is touted as 'civic action', a network of foundations and NGOs mushrooms to receive millions of dollars, new media outlets appear.

The ideological seeds of colour revolutions are sown long before anti-government movements organize mass demonstrations and engage in violent confrontations with the police.

These seeds can be dispersed in a number of different ways but can only grow if they fall on congenial soil, otherwise they will stay dormant until conditions in their microenvironment become favorable.

As a former academic studying the semiotics of culture, I would argue that the cultural field is not only perfectly suited for the germination of these seeds, but it's directly involved in their multiplication and distribution.

In order to understand US-sponsored regime-change we should acknowledge culture and theory as crucial weapons in the overall arsenal deployed to perpetuate US interests around the world and conceive a cultural defense system capable of identifying danger and neutralizing it. Letting a foreign power occupy the field of cultural production, dominate public discourse, and frame the narrative is tantamount to giving a burglar in your home a guest pass. And that is exactly what the Hong Kong government did for over twenty years.

We also need to understand that no matter how abstract they might be, ideas still require trusted agents to sow them and tend the field. The Swarm Model, employed in artificial intelligence and hybrid warfare, provides a good example. Swarming is a seemingly amorphous and yet coordinated type of behavior, where a cluster of agents interact with one another and with their environment. The agents follow very simple rules, and although there is no centralized control structure dictating how individual agents should behave, local, and relatively random, interactions between such agents lead to the emergence of 'intelligent', collective behavior. Interestingly, some agents might not be aware of the role they play as it becomes totally natural to them. Examples of swarm intelligence exist in natural systems such as ant colonies, bird flocking, fish schooling, bacterial and microbial growth, etc.

China's adversaries operated undisturbed in our city, built strongholds in academic circles, rose to positions of power and influence in the culture industry as even a cursory look at a course syllabus, film festival program or literary magazine would show.

Since Hong Kong didn't experience anything like the people's struggles for liberation from colonialist rule that led to the rejection of colonial identity in other countries, it soon became clear that building a Chinese national identity in post-handover Hong Kong would require sustained and concerted efforts. Regrettably very little was done in this respect: when British rule ended in 1997 it left behind a toxic legacy of colonial institutions, British-trained civil servants and a damaged collective psyche precariously held together by a false sense of superiority towards mainland China. The kind of cultural capital that promised social acceptance and distinction in stratified, class-conscious Hong Kong, was largely made of material and symbolic goods coming from the West.

Hong Kong was, and still is, teeming with educators, academics and cultural workers who are either foreigners, foreign-educated or share a neocolonial mindset anyway. They are the swarm pods peddling post-modernist perspectives on the theme of identity, perspectives that dismiss any articulation of Chinese identity as "essentialist", ridicule the idea of national

identity as obsolete in the age of the "global cultural supermarket" where supposedly one can adopt and discard fanciful individual identities at the drop of a hat.

In 2000 Gordon Mathews, an American anthropologist teaching at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, published a book titled 'Global Culture/Individual Identity' that soon became a canonical text in the debate about post-colonial identity in Hong Kong. Virtually every paper subsequently published about this topic drew upon his research and its underlying argument that our roots are simply one more consumer choice.

The handover of Hong Kong had taken place at a time when U.S. dominance was not only a matter of political, economic and military might, but also predicated upon a cultural hegemony that needed to be constantly upheld and updated through the media and education in order to shape public opinion. Postmodernism proved to be an exceptionally versatile and well-suited tool to maintain that hegemony. Postmodernist ideas, for all their radical and anti-authoritarian claims, are in fact perfectly acceptable to an imperial power which understands that its rule is safest when it can fragment the identity of its opposition and most vulnerable when it has to face a united front.

It's not a mere coincidence that in 1980s the CIA took a keen interest in French postmodernism and deemed it the best defense against Marxism. After all, a narrative that questions the distinction between facts and opinions, truth and fiction and regards reason with skepticism perfectly suits the interests of a country that successfully peddles fiction to the farthest reaches of the world thanks to its education, media and entertainment industries. The absurd and yet convincing portrayal of the U.S. as a bastion of freedom, democracy and human rights is testament to the power of these industries.

Paradoxically, the same intellectuals who had dissected the concept of national identity and rejected it as toxic, refused to subject the holy trinity of 'freedom, democracy and human rights' to any kind of rational scrutiny. The old skeptics and relativists soon became dogmatic defenders of ethical absolutes that by transcending any cultural, historical and political specificity have effectively become the foundation principles of a new theology.

They conveniently forget that philosophers have been debating the concept of freedom for centuries and that, even within the same philosophical tradition, its interpretation varies considerably. They also disregard the fact that no agreed definition of democracy exists in international law and pay no attention to local rights cultures which preceded the international human rights movement by centuries.

Most worryingly, these concepts serve as empty containers, which can be filled with any content deemed useful to disguise U.S. imperialism.

The US began laying the brickwork for a colour revolution in Hong Kong even before the 1997 handover: NED funding for Hong Kong-based groups dates back to 1994 and was described as "consistent" by Louisa Greve, who was vice president of programs for Asia, the Middle East and North Africa until 2017. Its first strategic objective was to prevent the enactment of a national security law (Article 23) in Hong Kong, as this would effectively make the activities of NED and other foreign-funded organizations illegal.

When in 2003 the Secretary for Security Regina Ip announced a Bill to implement Article 23, as if on cue, half a million people marched against the government proposal, Mrs. Ip became the target of a coordinated vilification campaign that forced her to resign from office and the Bill was eventually withdrawn.

So, why did so many people take to the streets to oppose Article 23, even if it had no impact on their lives, didn't infringe on their freedom of expression and assembly? Why did the legal sector, including the Bar Association and Law professors, so vehemently denounced a law that is standard in many jurisdictions, including the most liberal and democratic societies?

Besides, not even a fraction of those protesters could be described as politically active, for instance they wouldn't march to defend workers' rights, demand a minimum wage or the right to breathe cleaner air, as evidenced by the small scale of previous demonstrations.

How could the Civil Human Rights Front, a coalition of NGOs, Christian churches, Trotskyites, small labour unions and

opposition parties mobilize hundreds of thousands of people against Article 23? What was the glue that held these disparate groups together?

An irrational fear of China and distrust of its government and institutions might have been contributing factors, as they largely frame the mainstream media narrative about China, but the anti-China sentiment that was cultivated in colonial times could only remain dominant in political, judicial and cultural circles after 1997 thanks to the laissez faire approach of local authorities and the relentless efforts of foreign agents and fifth columnists. Their task was to scupper the One Country Two Systems governance model and contrast any rise of patriotic feelings towards China. If the One Country Two Systems model failed in Hong Kong, the U.S. would also achieve another strategic goal at no cost, because Taiwan wouldn't be tempted to adopt it in the future. As to the multiple implications of such failure for the rest of China, they fall outside of the scope of this article.

In 1999 A chance encounter with a British acquaintance I hadn't seen for many years put me in the unenviable position of observing the methods and tactics of a NED "agent of change" at a time when very little was known about US-sponsored colour revolutions. As we lived very close to each other and shared a few interests, I had the opportunity to observe the way she and other agents operated to carry out the legal elements of illegal regime-change operations. After obtaining degrees in both Chinese language and Politics from SOAS University of London she had been offered a paid internship in New York with an NGO called Human Rights in China, mainly funded by NED and Soros' Open Society Institute. After being appointed Research Director, in 1997 she was sent to Hong Kong by the same NGO. She was usually evasive about her employers and preferred to introduce herself as a PH.D student at Columbia University pursuing her academic research in the field of Human Rights Law. As a researcher she gained access to Hong Kong universities and soon started to liaise with the Centre of Comparative and Public Law and the newly created Master Program in Human Rights Law at HKU. She co-authored several papers with the

most vocal critics of the Chinese Central Government, inevitably designated as an "authoritarian and oppressive regime" in studies that focused on Tibet, Xinjiang and migrant workers, and helped facilitate academic exchanges between U.S. universities and HKU junior researchers and professors, who were often rewarded with invitations to conferences, publications, summer programs, grants, etc. American Ph.D. students researching human rights became conspicuous in the department and after a few years rose to influential positions. One could say that my acquaintance was actively recruiting and grooming academics to create a critical mass of China-haters within the Department of Law. Another important step was forging ties with community leaders, activists, journalists and NGOs through the Street Law workshops offered by the Centre of Comparative and Public Law. Unsurprisingly among the financial sponsors of these workshops the U.S. Consulate in Hong Kong features prominently. Because violent political confrontation and anti-government activities often result in legal proceedings, the colour revolution sponsors had to make sure that there would be enough pro-bono lawyers to defend activists, enough legal scholars to challenge the government's enactment of the most debated article in the Basic Law and to advance Western liberal values. In this light we can read the legal advice and support they offered to minority groups such as LGBT rights organizations. Advocating for same-sex marriage is a good example of how these human rights defenders put the local government in a double bind: if it didn't meet their demands for same-sex marriage it would be cast as intolerant, oppressive and backward, if it did, the majority of citizens who held conservative views on this subject would feel alienated.

To prepare a colour revolution, a network of interlocking foundations and charities is usually set up to put thousands of people through training courses, seminars, practical tuition conducted by legal and media specialists. And that was the case in Hong Kong too. One tireless 'agent of change' closely associated with my British acquaintance is the director of the LLM in Human Rights Programme at Hong Kong University, a U.S. citizen. She sat on the boards of several organizations including the Hong Kong Refugee Advice Centre (as past Chairperson), Justice Centre Hong Kong, and Amnesty International (Hong Kong) and

advises the Hong Kong Human Rights Monitor on a range of issues. While applauding protesters that were holding the city hostage she declared "The rule of law does not demand unquestioning obedience to existing regulations; in fact, defending the rule of law may sometimes require breaking rules". One can only wonder if she would encourage her compatriots to break rules at home.

My British acquaintance and her American pal were also closely associated with one of the board members of the Centre of Comparative and Public Law at HKU, professor Benny Tai Yiu-ting, who served as Associate Dean of the Faculty of Law from 2000 to 2008. In 2014 he was one of the initiators of the illegal Occupy Central movement, aka Umbrella Movement, and was later convicted and jailed for incitement. The prominent role played by legal experts in undermining the government authority, disseminating anti-China propaganda, organizing protests and coaching activists is reflected in the US$460,000 grant they received from NED. The 2012 NED annual report states that the money was to "foster awareness regarding Hong Kong's political institutions and constitutional reform process and to develop the capacity of citizens — particularly university students — to more effectively participate in the public debate on political reform."

Twenty years ago my acquaintance was not only active in the subversive cluster that was growing in size at the HKU Department of Law, but was also using her connection with the department as a credential to approach political groups and civil society organizations. Using the usual code word "human rights" she moved with ease from Christian groups such as the Hong Kong Women Christian Council to a Trotskyite ragtag collective called April Fifth Action Group which was led by "Longhair" Leung Kwok-hung.

This group was generally dismissed as a bunch of politically marginal, ridiculous characters better-known for posturing and shouting nonsense into their loudspeakers than their ability to get their point across in a coherent manner. In private she too joked about their intellectual limitations, but she was coaching them with the zeal of a missionary. In any case her coaching achieved some results, as Leung Kwok-hung, in his trademark

Che Guevara t-shirt, was elected to the Legislative Council in 2004. It's worth noting that both his group and the various Christian ones she had 'befriended' were among the founders of the Civil Human Rights Front, the coalition of NGOs, civic and religious groups, pro-democracy parties that in 2003 mobilized half a million people against Article 23 of the Basic Law. Such a large-scale demonstration, unusual for Hong Kong, was a swarm response to a threat that had been carefully manufactured and amplified by the anti-China forces that formed this front. By now we know that the National Endowment for Democracy, through the Solidarity Center (SC) and the National Democratic Institute (NDI) between 1995 and 2013, injected more than $1.9 million into the coffers of this coalition.

The role of Trotskyites in enabling the West create contact with members of the opposition in Soviet Bloc countries in the 1980s is well-known and has been researched by historians. It seems that they still have some use for Washington, like Christian groups.

As to my acquaintance's tireless activism, it was financially well rewarded — she and her unemployed husband could live comfortably in one of the most expensive cities in the world and jet between Hong Kong, New York and London. When her mission was accomplished she was granted a scholarship at an Ivy League university that led to a predictable academic career: teaching and writing about human rights and social movements in China.

By the time of her departure, a network of interlocking foundations and charities, think tanks, education, art and culture groups had already started to proliferate and could not only provide the logistics for the transfer of funds to activists, but also sponsor work visas for foreign nationals and establish channels to recruit local members. The ultimate irony is that many of these organizations and groups even applied for and received public grants to finance their 'soft power' operations. They put thousands of people through training courses conducted by legal, education and media specialists. Their media-savvy, public relations campaigns achieved a great degree of success even before social media entered the fray.

What is to be done?

The process of ideological subversion we have witnessed in Hong Kong required seed capital, both human, cultural and financial. Once the seeds have been sown, it's extremely difficult to remove the weeds that strangle our society. It takes from 15 to 20 years to demoralize a nation. Why that many years? Because this is the minimum number of years required to educate one generation and now you can't get through to those who have been educated to hate China. They are programmed to think and react to certain stimuli in a certain pattern. You cannot change their mind even if you expose them to authentic information. Even if you prove that white is white and black is black, you still cannot change their basic perception and behavior. Facts no longer matter, emotion is everything. The swarm pods are no different from an echo-chamber and where they create clusters rational debate becomes impossible. We need to accept that Hong Kong is in the midst of a deep-rooted civil conflict of the sort that lasts decades.

In other words, for these people the process of demoralization is complete and hardly reversible. It will take another 15 or 20 years to educate a new generation of patriotic citizens who would be acting in the interests of China.

I would argue that China needs a hands-on rather than a hands-off approach in Hong Kong in order to ignite the imagination of Hong Kong's new generations and mobilize anti-colonial and anti-imperialist forces. Local cadres must be trained to exploit the contradictions of the pro-democracy camp whose empty rhetoric about social justice is backed by an imperialist super-power that is ruled by a capitalist elite. China shouldn't shy away from the ideological battle that is being fought in Hong Kong: as a more equitable society than the U.S., the Chinese model can provide an attractive alternative to the hypocrisy of the neo-colonialist front, an alternative that draws not only on national pride and tradition but also on the revolutionary history of the Chinese Communist Party. Even during the Long March, while faced with many hardships, Mao Tse-Tung attached great importance to art and literature, fully aware of the role played by culture in shaping public opinion. Winning the hearts and minds

of the younger generations requires a mobilization of soft power not only in the education and media fields, but also in so-called 'fringe cultures' where opposition to mainstream cultural norms and values is elaborated.

Hong Kong – Colony to National Security Law

By Retired Judge Julie Tang,
San Francisco July 28, 2020

I WAS BORN and raised in colonial Hong Kong where I spent most of my teenage years before I came to the US in 1967.

Growing up in Hong Kong, I learned first-hand the racism, discrimination and oppression of the Chinese people by the British government. A British brand of white superiority was imposed upon Hong Kong that lasted more than 99 years. It created a devastating effect on the socio-psychological dynamics upon the Chinese people of Hong Kong, especially among the young people. Its influence persists even to this day.

Under British rule, there was no democracy, and there were no public elections. It was only in the late 1970s, in anticipation of Hong Kong being returned to China, that the British governor started to allow a limited number of seats in the legislature to be opened to the public for election. But as colonization goes, the Hong Kong government was beholden only to Britain. England also controlled the judiciary whose judges were appointed by the governor. The final court of adjudication was in England, not Hong Kong.

In spite of a free market economy, the British companies had a monopoly on trade and commerce. All public transportation, including buses, trains, trams, ferries, etc. had to be purchased from Britain. Hong Kong taxpayers also helped support the British army stationed in Hong Kong. The British government controlled all land sales. Britain's coffers are enriched every time a land sale is permitted.

The real estate economy became a stable economy in Hong Kong since the 1970s and continues even to this date. It drove up prices and created a huge gap between the poor and the rich. As a consequence, poor people could not afford decent housing.

20% of the people in Hong Kong still live in cage-like housing units creating a poor social environment for the entire family.

Hong Kong was returned back to its motherland China in 1997. On this return, China created a "One-country, Two-systems" government system. It allows Hong Kong to manage its own governmental affairs with a "high degree of autonomy" and China did not get involved with Hong Kong's internal Governance. Hong Kong appeared peaceful and going about its business under this system without any problems. In 2013, there was an "occupy central" protest that shot up. But it subsided as quickly as it started.

However, in 2019, exactly 23 years after Hong Kong was returned to China, everything changed. This time, the US and China were in the midst of a hybrid warfare – info and trade war. And co-incidentally, it was reported that foreign monetary resources and organizational support became available to the protestors. A 'color revolution" started to take shape in the form of some of the most violent and lawless protests in the entire history of Hong Kong since colonial days.

It began as a peaceful protest against an Extradition Law that would allow the Hong Kong government to return a Hong Kong man accused of a murder of his pregnant girlfriend back to Taiwan, where the crime took place. The protest also gained momentum on the poverty issue confronting Hong Kong. But the movement evolved quickly into a politically charged separatist movement, turning it into an anti-China campaign. And in spite of the extradition law having been withdrawn, a large number of the protestors continued to engage in very violent conduct to disrupt an orderly and civilized society; some even swore to take down Hong Kong by any means. The protests continued and escalated into total mayhem against the city of Hong Kong and its citizens for a continuous solid 6 months.

I have personally joined and organized demonstrations; the last one was for "Black Lives Matter". But what repelled me about this particular protest was the degree of violence demonstrated by the protesters and its empowerment by Western powers. Protesters assaulted innocent people who did not agree with them, one man was burned alive, another killed with a brick

thrown at his head. The rioters destroyed university facilities and almost all the subway stations in Hong Kong. They blocked airports, bridges, highways and paralyzed traffic for days. Protesters used petrol bombs, laser pointers, umbrellas with sharp points, bows and arrows, and numerous other weapons to inflict serious physical harm upon an unprepared police force. They seemed well prepared to rain violence upon Hong Kong but were able to protect themselves in very well-equipped protective gear and high-tech gas masks. Hong Kong was transformed overnight from a beautiful, peaceful city into an inferno. Still not one protester was killed by the police. And the greater share of injury was suffered by the police force and civilians. http://youtu.be/e5hyi4mlYg.

The Treachery

There is treachery behind these movements – the role the American politicians and Western media played in this protest. The movement was branded as one for Hong Kong peoples' "freedom and democracy." But there was never any clear definition of what that meant for Hong Kong other than a suggestion for a direct voting system for the election of Governor. The demands by the protestors never addressed the poverty conditions of Hong Kong. The poverty issue was "taken off the table," so to speak. Many Hong Kong people turned away from and separated themselves from the protests while the Western countries continued to stoke the violence through their political leaders and mainstream media. At the height of the demonstrations, when the conduct of the protesters rose to the level of terrorism creating fear, suffering, and destruction in Hong Kong, US Senator Mark Rubio came to Hong Kong and proclaimed there was no violence in Hong Kong. Steve Bannon was also quoted on NPR talking about regime change was underway. The United States lawmakers passed human rights bills to attack China and the Hong Kong government in support of the violent protesters. In England, the British Parliament also spoke in unison along with the Americans – lending moral support to the Hong Kong rioters. The euphemistic propaganda line that what were clearly acts of rioting and terrorism, were spoken of as

peaceful protests by young heroic people who were oppressed by the Hong Kong government and struggling for freedom by all the major US and Western media that I used to respect.

United States Funds the Hong Kong protests

It is a sobering realization that our US tax dollars are actually paying for some of the activities that supported the riots and hence, the destruction of Hong Kong. According to the website of the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), a CIA offshoot, and the U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM), since 2014, the year of Hong Kong's Umbrella Protests, NED has officially poured over 29 million US dollars into Hong Kong to "identify new avenues for democracy and political reform." The protests damaged Hong Kong's economy tremendously. It cost Hong Kong taxpayers 400 million US dollars' worth of damage to the physical structures of Hong Kong. And that doesn't include damages such as deaths and injury to the civilians and police officers, and the political polarization that is dividing Hong Kong. These damages are incalculable and have long lasting ill effects.

Before the riots, Hong Kong enjoyed great world recognition for its free speech and freedom of economy. Hong Kong is rated #3 best in world record of human rights, and #2 best in world record of economic freedom, according to the Cato Institute, a conservative US think tank. Hong Kong has a direct election system for district and city-wide elected representatives and a version of representative election for its governor. The protesters never articulated what kind of a democratic government they want. It appears the protests are more about promoting anti-China sentiments rather than fighting for democracy and freedom.

Hong Kong desperately needed help to deal with many social issues. The pandemic added another level to a deeply divided Hong Kong over the protests and riots. It is therefore, most essential to have a stable and safe society to fight the pandemic and keep Hong Kong safe from further massive riots and violence that are politically motivated.

During the riots, there were strong evidence that the foreign influence was behind a lot of the lawlessness and violence

manifested by the protesters. Suspected CIA operatives were filmed directing the riots of Hong Kong. The US consulate's political sector representative was photographed meeting with the young leaders of the movement, among them Joshua wong, who acted very polite and deferential towards the American diplomat.

The National Security Act

To bring Hong Kong back under control from riots and violence, Hong Kong adopted the first National Security Law since its return to China. Its main aim is to rid Hong Kong of foreign infiltration aimed at creating separatism in Hong Kong's society. By getting rid of foreign spy operations and cutting off foreign support for those who seek to destroy Hong Kong, the Hong Kong government hopes to restore some semblance of peace back to the city. The National Security Law targets terrorism, separatism, secession, and collusion with foreign government's intrusion into Hong Kong's domestic affairs.

It also contains provisions to guarantee human rights for anyone accused under this law. And it re-affirms the governance of "One country-Two systems" set out in the Basic Law, Hong Kong's mini-constitution. Very importantly, something that the US and the Western countries seem to have forgotten is that Hong Kong's constitution also carries two exceptions to the "Two Systems," that "defense and foreign relations" matters are reserved solely under China's authority. And the autonomy China granted to Hong Kong is "a high degree of autonomy," NOT "absolute autonomy."

Effects on Chinese Americans

We urge the US to stay out of the internal affairs of Hong Kong. Hong Kong is China's problem, not ours. Chinese-Americans stand to suffer the greatest harm if a war is started between the US and China. Our FBI director under Trump is already unfairly casting Chinese Americans as spies. Given US's history of putting Japanese Americans in concentration camps during WWII, Chinese Americans are not in any less danger of

being castigated and victimized should a war start with China. We already witnessed the effects of President Trump calling the pandemic the "Chinese virus" and "Kung-flu," causing a spike of anti-Asian violence across the US. There were approximately 2050 cases of anti-Asian racist incidents reported to the web site STOPAAPIHate since March 2020. And there are probably many more that were not reported. Asians are now wary of going out unprotected from racist people who blame us for the pandemic. Parents are worried their children will suffer bullying when they eventually return to school. The level of anxiety among Asians over racism during this pandemic is very real and concerning.

Prologue

We strongly urge the US government to seek cooperation with China, not confrontation and provocation. The two countries' cooperation will have a global positive effect on the world. The continuing confrontation will only lead us to the most undesirable effect – war with China. This is something that every American, not just Asians, should be concerned with. And we hope this year in November we will be electing leaders who will work towards a peace plan with China, not a war plan.

On socialist Vietnam's response to COVID-19

By Dr. Ngo Thanh Nhan and Merle Ratner
August 27, 2020

TONIGHT I'D like to talk about Vietnam's experience in combating COVID-19. The first case in Vietnam was on Jan. 23. Between then and early July there were about 200 cases of infection – and no deaths. The second wave of the new strain of COVID-19 started on July 1. Even with this second wave, as of today, Aug. 20, Vietnam has recorded only 1,034 cases with 29 deaths. Many of those who died had terminal illness and some cases were related to long-term illness from Agent Orange toxins [from the 1955-1975 U.S. war on the country].

The Ministry of Health gives instant reporting at ncov.moh.gov.vn where data is submitted directly from local hospitals across the country.

Vietnam is a country of more than 97 million people, so 29 deaths is 0.299 per million of the population. The United States is a country of 331 million people where there have been more than 183,650 deaths, which is 554.83 per million–or 1,855.82 times proportionally bigger.

The second wave of COVID-19 is centered in Da Nang, the third-largest city in Vietnam, and a major tourist destination and transit city for foreign workers. Da Nang is also the second-largest hot spot for Agent Orange/dioxin in the land and water.

How did Vietnam, a developing country still dealing with the impact of United States chemical warfare, manage to achieve such impressive results?

First and foremost is the dedication to defeat COVID-19 with a priority on saving lives. Early on the Prime Minister of Vietnam declared that the entire country would focus all of its human potential and economic and technological capacity on ending the pandemic.

It was designated a campaign like the campaigns Vietnam fought to win national liberation. The slogan was "Vietnam, dare to win, dare to beat the corona virus." Preserving human life and health was the highest focus rather than Vietnam's economic growth! Reopening the economy was only done when it was deemed safe for workers and their communities.

Socialist values against the pandemic

Vietnam is a socialist-oriented market economy. To deal with COVID-19, the Communist Party in Vietnam applied socialist values and strategy to overcome the weaknesses of the market economy.

The Party and the government did a materialist analysis of COVID-19 — of where and to whom it was being transmitted and how it could be fought. They took into account the real conditions in Vietnam.

As a mid-level developing socialist country, Vietnam could not rely on an abundant supply of high-tech medical equipment but could rely on a public health system that had been built up for many years to serve the people. While Vietnam's hospital system varies in quality, its preventive health and public health planning and response is impressive, with a serious investment in public health infrastructure such as emergency operations centers. Vietnam had also learned from its experience in earlier SARS and avian influenza pandemics.

Vietnam decided to focus on stopping the outbreak before it spread widely, using contact and community tracing, testing where available, and a massive public education and outreach program.

In the areas where COVID-19 had spread, Vietnam shut down non-essential businesses and schools. In neighborhoods with a high incidence, residents were placed under strict quarantines. People were asked to stay in their homes to avoid further transmission and were provided with food, medicine and medical care. People coming from overseas underwent a mandatory two-week quarantine in hotels or other centers where they were provided with free food, lodging and medical treatment.

Everyone had access to treatment whatever their financial status. Masks and PPE were widely available to medical people, to essential workers and to ordinary people.

Science, cultural work, centralized planning applied

Vietnam utilized the latest science to study the strains of COVID-19 from the first to the second wave. Early on they developed a comprehensive system of contact tracing using a community model that extended down to the grassroots level, the urban neighborhoods and rural hamlets. Leaders told the truth to the people, early and often, about the science of COVID-19 and what people could do to prevent exposure.

Vietnam was very quickly able to get factories to pivot to producing everything from PPE to medical equipment. Science and technology experts played a role by inventing phone applications that allowed people to see if people were infected with COVID-19 within a certain radius. Signing up for these apps was voluntary and popular.

Information and cultural workers were mobilized to educate, update, inspire and mobilize the people to fight COVID-19. Colorful banners on the streets, announcements on TV, and daily briefings by the prime minister and city leaders conveyed a clear, practical, consistent and compassionate message.

The government through its ministries, particularly the Ministry of Health, mobilized broader networks to disseminate instantaneous information through central online platforms. Together with health workers, young artists produced a popular song showing people how to wash their hands properly, which was widely circulated on Vietnamese media and internationally. This consistent information and cultural work prevented the spreading of misinformation and rumors.

People's power democracy

Everything we've just described has been covered by the international press. What has not been a focus, and what is, in fact, most crucial to Vietnam's success, is people's power and socialist democracy in Vietnam!

This is the human protagonist in socialism, and it is what made all the difference in Vietnam's ability to do so well in fighting COVID-19. Exemplars in Global Health described this approach as "a strong whole-of-society approach [that] engages multi-sectoral stakeholders in decision-making process and activate[s] cohesive participation of appropriate measures." (ourworldindata.org/COVID-19-exemplar-vietnam)

The campaign against COVID-19 was carried out by the Communist Party, the mass organizations and the whole people. With the Party playing the leading role in setting the policy and strategy, it mobilized Party members from the grassroots to the provinces to the national level to develop, explain and implement the COVID-19 strategy.

Mass organizations involved are the Vietnam Fatherland Front, Vietnam Women's Union, the Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union, the Vietnam Farmers Union, the Vietnam General Confederation of Labor, and the Vietnam Association for Victims of Agent Orange/dioxin. Many other mass organizations, including the army, leapt in to action to organize their members in the public health campaign.

The neighborhood block associations played a complementary role to that of the party and the mass organizations. These block organizations constitute the smallest unit of community organization and exist in many streets in cities and the countryside across Vietnam.

Neighbors helped their neighbors to identify symptoms of COVID-19 and to access medical care. They helped enforce mask wearing and other quarantine rules by exerting social pressure in their collectively oriented communities, curbing any self-centered or selfish behavior. There were no armed protests against the quarantine in Vietnam as there were here in the U.S.

Socialist analysis

One of the hallmarks of a socialist society is the ability to do analysis of time, place and condition, and develop strategy and tactics to meet the needs of the people at that time. This goes together with regular assessments of what was successful and what was not, drawing lessons for improvement.

Criticism/self-criticism is practiced to strengthen people's work, using their strength to overcome their weaknesses. This allowed Vietnam to identify complacency after the first wave of the virus as a problem and to take corrective measures to stem the second wave with popular mobilization.

Vietnam's response to COVID-19 has an internationalist focus as well. Cuba and Vietnam have a particularly strong cooperation. Cuba sent Vietnam a team of medical experts and thousands of vials of an antiviral drug, Interferon alfa-2b, to fight against COVID-19. Vietnam recently donated three tons of medical equipment to Cuba, including rapid test kits, masks and protective suits along with 5,000 tons of rice. Vietnam also helped other countries suffering from the pandemic, even sending donations of PPE to Europe and the U.S.

You can see how differently socialist Vietnam manages the COVID-19 crisis than the United States. In Vietnam, people's level of confidence in the Communist Party and the government has been strengthened by the achievements of the campaign to defeat COVID-19. People feel a strong sense of pride, as the country has come together to support everyone, and to do what few other countries have been able to do.

Dr. Ngo Thanh Nhan is with the Viêt Solidarity & Action Network, Vietnam Agent Orange Relief & Responsibility Campaign, and also Việt Solidarity and Action Network for Black Lives Matter, Mekong-NYC. They ask readers to note that the views expressed here are their personal opinions. problem and to take corrective measures to stem the second wave with popular mobilization.

Resources

Learning from COVID-19 Responses in the U.S. and China

By calvin deutschbein
IACenter.org

July 2020

Powerpoint Presentation

FACT #1: The US has more cases than anywhere in the world.

On July 4, 2020, there were 2.8 million confirmed US cases, over 25% of the world's total (11.1 million). Brazil, which has the next most, has only about half the cases of the U.S. (1.5 million). China has only 84 thousand, Iran 240 thousand, and the entire European Union and the United Kingdom about 1.5 million (ecdc. europa.eu)

FACT #2: The US outbreak is growing faster than anywhere in the world.

The U.S. has had the most daily new cases anywhere in the world since early March, other than a brief period from when Brazil matched the U.S., and the growth rate continues to increase. As of July 4, the U.S. has had 132 thousand deaths, 661 in the past 24 hours. China has had only 4634 deaths, with the most recent on May 16.

FACT #3: The US for-profit healthcare system makes treatment inaccessible.

The U.S. spends 17% of its GDP on healthcare, over half again over the next highest, 11% in Switzerland. Yet only 84% of adults see doctors each year and drugs cost more than the rest of the world . The U.S. has fewer hospital beds per person than most (80%) nations, and closes hospitals faster than most nations as its population grows.

FACT #4: The US has refused international aid.

Within 12 days of discovering the virus, Chinese researchers isolated its genetic material and shared it with the World Health Organization (WHO) to develop diagnostic tests that were available weeks before the first US deaths. The U.S. did not collaborate with Chinese or other WHO researchers, leading to the outbreak.

FACT #5: The US failed to deploy disease control measures.

The U.S. response never slowed viral spread to half its highest rate, and the U.S. reopened while having the most cases in the world and the fastest spread. In contrast, the Chinese response in Wuhan sustained a lockdown of 57 million people until there were no new daily cases.

GRAPH: Chinese (red) v U.S. (blue) daily new cases, 7 day average, first 120 days after first confirmed death. Lines represent 10000 cases. [DOWNLOAD PDF FOR GRAPH].

FACT #6: In the US, responses focused on economic profits rather than human lives.

The U.S. has spent trillions on Wall Street and the Pentagon, instead of providing healthcare, housing, or food, and has offered only a single one time cash payment to the people. The U.S. has no universal healthcare, housing, food security, or higher education programs despite massive national wealth.

FACT #7: Effective responses center human needs.

By contrast, China, a developing nation, has safely implemented ambitious containment programs based on collective healthcare, food stability, and educational programs won by the 1949 Communist Revolution.

FACT #8: The US turned to militarism over health.

Since the outbreak, the U.S. has stoked sinophobic attacks against Chinese people, and falsely blamed China for spreading the virus (many U.S. cases are from Italy.) The U.S. has aggressively placed aircraft carriers near China, leaked false reports claiming the virus was a biological weapon, and postured in general for war rather than peace and health.

200 years of U.S. Military Deployments Against China 1820-2020

By Michael Kramer
IACenter.org

August 2020

U.S. ground, air and naval forces from a Jim Crow-era military, occupied and patrolled Chinese cities, coastal waters and rivers from the 1820 until 1949. This brutal and racist occupation was always resisted by the Chinese people. It continues to this day with U.S. aircraft carriers, destroyer and nuclear submarines asserting "Freedom of Navigation" in the South China Sea.

May 16, 1820: The 38-gun wooden hulled three-masted heavy frigate USS Congress with a crew of 340 docks unannounced and uninvited in Canton (now Guangzhou).

1835: The U.S. Navy East India Squadron is established. Ships in the squadron take part in the Second Opium War (1856-1860) against China.

1854: The East India Squadron forms the Yangtze River Patrol Force to protect U.S. citizens, U.S. property and Christian missionaries. It operates between Shanghai and Chungking, a distance of over a thousand miles, until 1949.

April 4, 1854: Marines and sailors from the USS Perry land in Shanghai to protect U.S. and European commercial interests in a joint operation with Britain. They do not withdraw until June 1854.

May 19, 1855: Marines and sailors from the USS Powhatan land in Shanghai to protect U.S. citizens.

August 4-5, 1855: The USS Powhatan along with British allies seize 17 Chinese ships and blow up another in the Battle

of Ty-Ho Bay off the coast of Hong Kong. The U.S. demonizes the Chinese as pirates. Hundreds of Chinese are killed and over a thousand are taken prisoner.

October 22, 1856: Marines and sailors from the USS Portsmouth land in Canton to protect U.S. interests. The force is continuously reinforced over the next few weeks.

Nov. 16-24, 1856: The USS Portsmouth, USS San Jacinto and USS Levant bombard and occupy Chinese forts on the Pearl River in alliance with British drug dealers during the Second Opium War.

June 24-26, 1859: The Second Battle of Taku Forts takes place during the Second Opium War. U.S., British and French forces are defeated as they fail to seize forts from Chinese defenders on the Hai River in Tianjin.

July 31, 1859: Marines and sailors from the USS Mississippi deploy to Shanghai with British help to protect U.S. interests.

June 20, 1866: Marines and sailors from the USS Washusett land at Newchwang (now known as Yingkou) on a punitive expedition after the U.S. Consul is allegedly assaulted. The force is reinforced 5 days later. Tens of Chinese are tried and punished by the U.S. Navy before the USS Washusett withdraws.

June 18, 1867: Marines and sailors from the USS Wyoming and USS Hartford land on Formosa on a punitive expedition. Within 6 hours the expedition is forced to withdraw after meeting fierce resistance and their commander is killed.

1868: The East India Squadron is disbanded and the Asiatic Squadron is formed. In 1902 it is upgraded to the Asiatic Fleet.

Dec. 4, 1894: Marines from the USS Baltimore deploy to Tientsin. They stay there until May 1895.

Nov. 4, 1898: Marines from the USS Baltimore, USS Boston and USS Raleigh establish bases in Beijing and Tientsin to protect U.S. diplomatic missions. The Marines withdraw in March 1899.

May 24, 1900: The first U.S. ground forces land at Taku on the Hai River in northeastern China and join with eight other countries to put down the anti-foreign occupation uprising known as the Boxer Rebellion. The so-called China Relief Expedition

would grow to over 19,000 soldiers before it occupied the Imperial City in Beijing on August 15, 1900. Most military units are withdrawn from Beijing on September 28, 1900. The U.S. Army 9th Infantry Regiment remains to guard the U.S. Legation (Embassy).

Sept. 12, 1905: Marines from the Philippines arrive in Beijing to replace the U.S. Army 9th Infantry Regiment.

Dec. 20, 1905: Marines and sailors from the USS Baltimore land in Shanghai to "help preserve order" in response to anti-foreign demonstrations. They are joined by British, German. and Japanese troops.

Nov. 4, 1911: Marines from the USS Albany and USS Rainbow land in Shanghai to protect U.S. interests. They withdraw on Nov. 14th.

Jan. 18, 1912: Less than three weeks after the Republic of China is established the U.S. Army 15th Infantry Regiment deploys to Tientsin. It does not leave China until March 2, 1938.

July 7-Aug. 17, 1913: Marines from the USS Baltimore and USS Rainbow land five times in Shanghai to protect U.S. interests.

April 28, 1922: Marines from the USS Baltimore deploy to Beijing to strengthen forces guarding the U.S. Legation.

May 5, 1922: Marines from the USS Huron deploy to Shanghai to protect U.S. interests.

Oct. 6, 1924: Marines from the USS Asheville form the First Expeditionary Force and land in Shanghai. They then proceed to Tientsin and do not withdraw until Feb. 8, 1925.

Jan. 22, 1925: Marines form the Second Expeditionary Force and deploy to Shanghai from the Philippines. Numerous other Marine deployments take place throughout the rest of the year.

Feb. 24, 1927: The 4th Marine Regiment commanded by Brigadier General Smedley Butler arrives from San Diego aboard the USS Chaumont. The ship docks at the Standard Oil Company terminal in Shanghai. U.S. military forces in China now total 6,000 troops and 44 naval vessels in Chinese waters. Butler later admits "In China in 1927 I helped see to it that Standard Oil went on its way unmolested".

March 4, 1927: Marines from the USS Pittsburgh seize a ship being held by Chinese authorities and return it to the Standard Oil Company

March 25, 1927: Marines from the USS Pittsburgh begin patrolling the main waterfront boulevard in downtown Shanghai. Marines from the USS Sacramento begin guarding the property of the Universal Leaf and Tobacco Company.

April 25, 1927: Marine aviation units VF-3M and VO-5M arrive from San Diego and Guam. Chinese pasture land 35 miles from Tientsin is occupied and an airfield is built.

May 2, 1927: The 6th Marine Regiment arrives in Shanghai on board the USS Henderson.

Feb. 4, 1932: The U.S. Army 31st Regiment arrives in Shanghai to reinforce the 4th Marine Regiment. It withdraws to the Philippines on July 5, 1932.

Sept. 30, 1945: Operation Beleaguer begins with the 1st Marine Division arriving in China and deploying to Shanghai and Beijing. It is followed by an additional 50,000 Marines from the III Amphibious Corps, warships from the 7th Fleet, the 14th Air Force and two Navy Construction Battalions. The stated mission is to facilitate the surrender and repatriation of 600,000 Japanese soldiers after the end of World War II.

Oct. 6, 1945: The 14th Air Force begins airlifting 50,000 Kuomintang troops around China for three weeks as they fight a losing battle against the People's Liberation Army (PLA).

July 13, 1946: PLA forces capture seven Marines guarding a bridge in Hebei Province.

July 29,1946: PLA forces ambush a Marine patrol in a battle that lasts four hours. Four Marines are killed.

April 4, 1947: The last major clash occurs between the PLA and the Marines who suffer 5 killed and 16 wounded.

May 26, 1949: Operation Beleaguer ends with the USS Manchester departing Tsingtao. The U.S. occupation of China has finally ended.

1958-1974: The CIA Tibetan Program trains thousands of Tibetan Chinese at Camp Hale in Colorado to wage war against

the People's Republic of China. The program includes airdrops and support for a low intensity guerrilla war that is defeated by the PLA.

July 2020: Carrier strike groups from the 7th Fleet organized around the USS Nimitz and USS Ronald Reagan conduct aggressive maneuvers off the coast of China in the South China Sea.

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U.S. ground, air and naval forces from a Jim Crow-era military occupied and patrolled

Chinese cities, coastal waters and rivers from the 1830's until 1949. This brutal and racist

occupation was always resisted by the Chinese people.

Compiled by Michael Kramer - member of the Veterans For Peace / China Working Group.

U.S. Role in Hong Kong Protests

International Action Center Statement

August 2019

U.S. imperialism is the greatest enemy of the world's peoples struggling for a future with dignity, sovereignty and full human rights. Wall Street and finance capital maintains its dominance through the threat of over 800 foreign military bases, aircraft carriers, constant coups, targeted assassinations, drone attacks and starvation sanctions imposed on over 30 countries around the world.

Wall Street also uses the soft power National Endowment for Democracy (NED) to fund many thousands of NGOs, reactionary political parties, and alliances with corrupt dictators all over the world.

Recent mass protests against a proposed modification of extradition laws have rattled Hong Kong. It is the natural response of all progressive forces to rally to the side of mass demonstrations. But it is the duty of revolutionaries to look deeper, to ask what forces are behind a movement, and who stands to benefit.

Britain stole Hong Kong from China at the conclusion of the 1st Opium War in 1842. Through the Opium Wars, Britain and the U.S. military imposed the opium trade, unequal treaties and occupation. One hundred years of imperialist looting completely impoverished and underdeveloped China.

The victory of the Chinese Revolution in 1949 radically changed China and began the efforts to build socialism. But for 30 years, from 1949 to 1979 China was completely walled off, blockaded and sanctioned by the U.S. and western imperialist countries.

In 1979 under the 'reform and opening up' initiated under Deng Xiaoping China made the concession of capitalist market reforms. This finally gave China access to some technology and

capital from the industrialized world but was a deal with the devil, strengthening the capitalist class in China.

The British colony of Hong Kong was returned to China in 1997 under the 'one country, two systems' principle that preserved much of the British colonial legal/judicial system in the former colony. Hong Kong is a center of world finance capital. It is deeply hostile to the social measures that have lifted hundreds of millions of people in mainland China out of extreme poverty and provided high standards of health care, education and modern infrastructure. Finance capital has made strong inroads into China. Hong Kong is the West's base of operations, encouraging the growth of a capitalist class in China that threatens the foundations of socialism. Today China is a deeply contradictory society, characterized by the struggle between a re-born capitalist class and the aspirations of Chinese workers and peasants to maintain and expand a planned economy.

It is in the context of this struggle, as well as the escalating U.S. military encirclement and trade war against China that the current protests in Hong Kong must be understood. The forces of finance capital in Hong Kong and their allies in the U.S. and Europe want to pull Hong Kong away from China so it can function as an economic and political outpost in the region. This means limiting legal and political integration with China as much as possible. To this end the U.S. has provided extensive political, financial and media support to the protests.

The vocabulary of protest is available to both the left and right. Through the NED the U.S. has financed coup attempts, often involving a component of mass protest in Honduras, Nicaragua, Venezuela, Haiti, Ukraine and Syria. Any movement has the potential to sweep into it many well-meaning progressive people, often with legitimate grievances whose interests are not those of the movement's leadership. Multiple member organizations of the Civil Human Rights Front, the coalition behind the recent protests receive or have received funding from the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) a U.S. funded soft-power organization that doles out money in the interests of U.S. imperialism. These include the: Hong Kong Institute of Human Resource Management, Hong Kong Confederation of

Trade Unions, Hong Kong Journalists Association, Civic Party, Labor Party and Democratic Party.

Over 37,000 NGOs, with staff in the tens of thousands are registered in Hong Kong, many of which receive funding from the U.S. and Europe. Martin Lee, founder of the Democratic Party, a member organization of the Civil Human Rights Front met with U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo during the protests. Pompeo expressed support for the protests at the meeting. If the protests are in fact serving a progressive end, they would not be supported by the reactionary leadership of U.S. imperialism, the very force attempting to carry out a coup in Venezuela, threatening Peoples Korea and trying to start a war with Iran.

Hong Kong's independent judicial/legal system is a relic British colonialism. Nowhere else in the world does a city have independent extradition laws, with authority above that of a sovereign country. Despite decades of multi-million dollar western funding Hong Kong has a poverty rate of 20% (23.1% for children) compared to less than 1% in mainland China. In the past 20 years poverty in Hong Kong has remained high while mainland China has lifted hundreds of millions of people out of poverty. Recent protests, much like the 'Occupy Central' protests in Hong Kong in 2014 have not raised this issue. The protests have been directed at leadership connected to mainland China while ignoring the U.S. connected banks and ultra wealthy capitalists based in Hong Kong who clearly show no interest in addressing poverty or other desperate needs. The U.S. claims to be concerned with free speech and politically motivated extraditions, while it aggressively pursues the extradition of Julian Assange for exposing the crimes of U.S. imperialism.The corporate media in the U.S. and Europe have enthusiastically reported on Hong Kong protests, in stark contrast to the meager, often critical coverage of mass protests in Gaza, Honduras, Sudan, Yemen, France or the recent general strike in Brazil. The difference in coverage exposes a difference in the forces behind the protests, a difference in who stands to benefit from them. U.S. imperialism has a long history of 'color revolutions' in which protests with a progressive, even revolutionary patina are used as cover for a reactionary, pro U.S. agenda. The world finance

capital forces in Hong Kong are allied with U.S. imperialism and opposed to socialist ownership and the leadership of China by the Chinese Communist Party.

Resources

A New Cold War against China is against the interests of humanity - NoColdWar.org

We note the increasingly aggressive statements and actions being taken by the US government in regard to China. These constitute a threat to world peace and are an obstacle to humanity successfully dealing with extremely serious common issues which confront it such as climate change, control of pandemics, racist discrimination and economic development.

We therefore believe that any New Cold War would run entirely counter to the interests of humanity. Instead we stand in favour of maximum global cooperation in order to tackle the enormous challenges we face as a species.

We therefore call upon the US to step back from this threat of a Cold War and also from other dangerous threats to world peace it is engaged in including: withdrawal from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces agreement; withdrawal from the Paris Climate Change Accords; and its increasing disengagement from UN bodies. The US should also stop pressuring other countries to adopt such dangerous positions.

We support China and the US basing their relations on mutual dialogue and centering on the common issues which unite humanity.

Dong Feng Collective

https://dongfengcollective.org/

"The interest in China is growing everywhere. Yet most of the available news and analysis outside China is produced by mainstream media from the Global North. To provide access to Chinese perspectives, the Dong Feng Collective — formed

by researchers from various countries — is preparing a weekly digest of news from China (with sources originally in Chinese and English). For reference, we will also include a limited selection of Western media articlesh."

Qiao Collective
https://www.qiaocollective.com/

"Qiao Collective is a collective of diaspora Chinese challenging U.S. aggression on China.

"We aim to challenge rising U.S. aggression towards the People's Republic of China and to equip the U.S. anti-war movement with the tools and analysis to better combat the stoking of a New Cold War conflict with China.

"We seek to be a bridge between the U.S. left and China's rich Marxist, anti-imperialist political work and thought in order to foster critical consideration of the role of China and socialism with Chinese characteristics in contemporary geopolitics.

"We aim to disrupt Western misinformation and propaganda and to affirm the basic humanity, subjectivity, and political agency of Chinese people. We believe misinformation, chauvinism, and false equivalencies have weakened the U.S. left's ability to understand aggression on China in the larger context of Western political, military, and economic imperialism in the Global South. We aim to confront the internalization of U.S. propaganda amongst the U.S. left by critically and realistically examining China's role in the world struggle against imperialism and capitalism.

"We work to provide a lens into China's role in supporting an emerging bloc of independent Global South nations mutually threatened by Western economic, military, and political violence. We are committed to the principles of socialist internationalism and strive towards solidarity and mutual exchange between China in its socialist path and the liberation movements of all Global South and colonized peoples.

"Qiao Collective is an all volunteer group with no funding. We are made up entirely of diaspora Chinese people living across multiple countries. We are a diverse group of diaspora Chinese,

including ethnic Chinese from Southeast Asia, mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan."

Pivot to Peace with China and the World - Veterans For Peace Resolution-August 2020

Whereas, Veterans For Peace is a global organization of Military Veterans and allies dedicated to building a culture of peace by using our experiences to inform the public of the true causes and enormous costs of wars, seeking to heal the wounds of wars, and working to end all wars and hostilities between nations, and

Whereas, the so-called Pivot to Asia of 2011 was in fact a pivot toward war and confrontation that that identified China as a competitor and adversary, carrying with it the threat of nuclear war, and

Whereas, this dangerous policy has created palpable feelings of fear, animosity and even hatred not only toward the People's Republic of China but toward Chinese people in general and Chinese-American citizens and other Asian peoples in the United States, and

Whereas, humanity now faces multiple crises which threaten the well-being and very survival of our species, crises which demand the cooperation of the two largest and most powerful countries, China and the United States,

Therefore Be It Resolved that Veterans For Peace urges the government of the United States to reject escalation towards global conflict and instead pursue peace, non-intervention, and cooperation with China and the rest of the world

Resolution Veterans For Peace Chapter Chapters 162 and 021 - Submitted by Eugene E Ruyle

cuyleruyle@mac.com

U.S. Out of the South China Sea – Veterans For Peace Resolution

Whereas, in July, 2020, the United States Navy began deploying two nuclear powered aircraft carriers, the USS Nimitz and the USS Ronald Reagan, together with a striking force of support destroyers, submarines, and aircraft into the South China Sea in what they call a FONOP, or "Freedom Of Navigation Operation," and

Whereas, there has been no threat to international shipping in the area since WWII. An estimated one-third of global shipping, or 5.3 trillion worth of goods, passes through the South China Sea. Most of this is Chinese, very little is American, and

Whereas, there are territorial and maritime skirmishes and disputes in the area, with several neighboring states claiming parts or all of the South China Sea and its islands, namely Brunei, the People's Republic of China (PRC), the Republic of China (ROC/Taiwan), Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Vietnam. These disputes focus more on fishing rights than on trade routes and, in any event, are being handled diplomatically by the states involved. The U.S. forces are not needed here, and

Whereas, the homeland of the U.S. is not in any way threatened by anything happening in the South China Sea, and the military capabilities of the reefs being expanded by China are scarcely comparable to the hundreds of U.S. military bases, packed with warships, nuclear weapons, and bombers, that have been set up across the Pacific region, including in South Korea and Australia, described by The Sun (UK) as a "perfect noose" around China, and

Whereas the introduction of nuclear capable warships into the South China Sea, within a few hundred miles of the Chinese coast, is viewed as a provocative act by the People's Republic of China, a major nuclear power, and therefore increases the danger of nuclear war, by design or accident, and

Whereas, humanity now faces multiple crises which threaten the well-being and very survival of our species, crises which demand the cooperation of the two largest and most powerful countries, China and the United States,

Therefore Be It Resolved that the Veterans For Peace East Bay Chapter 162 urges the government of the United States to withdraw all military and naval forces from the South China Sea and instead pursue peace, non-intervention, and cooperation with China and the rest of the world,

And Be It Further Resolved that Veterans for Peace East Bay Chapter 162 urges all VFP members and local chapters to distribute copies of this resolution widely, to elected officials, unions, and community organizations.

Resolution Veterans For Peace Chapter 162, submitted by Eugene E Ruyle cuyleruyle@mac.com

Pivot to Peace with China and the World - San Francisco Labor Council Resolution

Adopted July 13, 2020

https://iacenter.org/2020/07/16/sf-labor-council-adopts-pivot-to-peace-with-china-july-13-2020-resolution/

Military veterans tend to have a deeper understanding of the human costs of war. So it was not surprising that Veterans for Peace, East Bay chapter 162, introduced a resolution, Pivot to Peace with China and the World, urging a de-escalation of international tensions that could lead to a major war. The San Francisco Labor Council, concerned that leaders of both major political parties were back to beating the drums for war, adapted the resolution for use by labor unions:

Whereas, the San Francisco Labor Council, representing some 100,000 working people in labor unions, has many times advocated the resolution of international problems by peaceful means, and opposed attempts to draw the United States into war, and

Whereas, the so-called Pivot to Asia of 2011 was in fact a pivot toward war and confrontation that identified China as a competitor and adversary, carrying with it the threat of nuclear war, and

Whereas, this dangerous policy has created palpable feelings of fear, animosity and even hatred not only toward the

People's Republic of China but toward Chinese people in general and Chinese-American citizens and other Asian peoples in the United States, and

Whereas, humanity now faces multiple crises which threaten the well-being and very survival of our species, crises which demand the cooperation of the two largest and most powerful countries, China and the United States,

Therefore: be it resolved that the San Francisco Labor Council urges the government of the United States to reject escalation towards global conflict and instead pursue peace, non-intervention, and cooperation with China and the rest of the world.

Introduced by David Welsh, a delegate to the San Francisco Labor Council, and a member of Veterans for Peace chapter 162.

Why compare the impact of China and the U.S. on COVID-19

- As of publication date September 2020: In the U.S. – the Johns Hopkins database reports over 7 Million COVID Cases, including over 200,000 deaths, averaging about 5,000 deaths per week – the highest in the world.
- In China, however, total deaths are still under 5,000.
- As of August 4, 2020, the U.S. had 484 cases per million people; China 3 per million.
- China first warned the World Health Organization on December 31, 2019 of a potentially dangerous new virus. On that date China reported just **27 cases and no deaths.** The Beijing government initiated a national mobilization without delay.
- Despite many warnings, medical reports and daily news reports, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) prepared nothing. The CDC failed to even recommend wearing facemasks until April 3, 2020 - three months later. Why this total lack of preparation?
- Between March 18 and April 10, over 22 million people lost their jobs as the unemployment rate surged toward 15 percent. **In the same three weeks, U.S. billionaire wealth increased by $282 billion, an almost 10 percent gain.** — *Institute for Policy Studies.*
- The course of the pandemic in the past six months has confirmed the ability of people's mobilizations to combat a pandemic. Even with fewer resources, socialist countries and those with mass-based movements were better prepared to protect their populations.
- Despite possessing a more advanced technology, the United States, the center of global capitalism and the enforcer of private property, due to its chaotic, competitive infrastructure, left the population totally defenseless.
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Competition vs. cooperation
A book to break the media blockade

- **Warnings from China**
- **Spiraling disaster in the U.S.**
- **Systemic U.S. racism and COVID-19**
- **Global aid from China**
- **Race for the vaccine**
- **Escalating Anti-China campaign**

In January 2020, China alerted major international scientific bodies about the eruption of a dangerous new virus and heavily promoted basic precautions. U.S. politicians and corporate media ridiculed and ignored the warnings.

Washington ramped up its policy of racist propaganda, military encirclement, trade war and sanctions. The consequence, tens of thousands of COVID-19 deaths in the U.S. – the highest in the world.

Rather than global cooperation on testing, vaccine development and PPE supplies, the U.S. chose competition, profits and military build-up.

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